

Prove me, I must be dreaming. Can it really be...

EXCELSIOR 41?

100 YEARS OF THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT DAILY NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD

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By all accounts, I was a most bizarre Diction, and not only because Doug Aderson called me that. BUT I was sure some book and winning Diction that too. I was a bit worried to see the New King of the Hill.

The Top Ten Unusual Things That Happened at DigCon (Believe it Or Not)

(read from bottom up)

1. Doug Aderson found somebody shorter than himself
2. A new issue of *XL* appeared
3. The working rules were changed in the middle of the tournament...and no furniture was broken
4. Several behind Gary Nelson for the Koning Award were "Mr Award"
5. People voted for K.C. because they figured it was Ken Con with a K.
6. Gary Nelson won a game and the Journey only hours after copping the Koning Best Player trophy in full view of everyone.
7. Larry Peery (today Con-Con, London) and the world won a game.
8. The Facts in Five Journey was decided by Robert Losen's pharmaceutical knowledge.
9. Nobody had any sense inside finding the place, or even got surprised.
10. MFSince still had some centres at the end of three games.

DipGab

I dunno, folks. I've waited so long to publish an issue that for the first time I have to edit the hell out of what I've collected for the zine. So if the next few paragraphs read like an overdone précis, the reason is that I can only publish 60-page issues once a decade or so.

In August, a brand new 386 appeared at work, courtesy of Saied's brother Hafez, who has used one of those data-management systems to create an accounting package specialized for gas stations. They had no problem with me using it on graveyard shift, but then the input/output chip died (I was using it when this happened, but I appear to have been spared any blame for this), and Hafez has now decided that the environment at the station is too dusty for a computer.

About the same time, I bought a mouse for the XT, and tried to create a new Diplomacy map utilizing my 24-pin printer. But a few calculations showed that to get the higher resolution I'd need more memory, and some drawing programs I looked at all required a hard drive. I began entertaining thoughts of borrowing to buy a 286, and then I won a random-score jackpot at the bridge club for \$350, which provided enough of an incentive to start a down payment. I found that the store where I bought the 64 would allow me to pay in installments, and I bought their cheapest 286 system. At this point Hafez and a few other people advised me to get a 386 if possible. The difference was about \$500, but by the time I finished paying for it, the difference was more like \$300. The result is a new computer (for the techies: 386DX, 25MHz, 41MB hard drive, VGA colour monitor, to which I have since added DOS 5.0 and a non-upgradable \$40 version of Windows 3.0 to what I already had), which is all pretty nice.

In addition, I wrote this bit:

It had to happen. I couldn't go about spending \$1500 (it ended up being about \$1300) on a computer without incurring some serious jealousy from Nancy, who has expensive ideas of her own for apartment addi-

tions. She finally convinced me to agree to some of these requests, and as a result we are now well in debt to pay for a small freezer, a VCR, and the computer, all of which will total \$2500. The computer will be paid off by November, the freezer on Nan's Bay card by the end of the year, and the VCR replaces the rent-to-own arrangement on our TVs, which ended in July, and requires about \$20 less per month. As I write this, we're a week away from our next paycheque and nearly broke—we may not get a chance to try out the VCR until then, since we don't have any tapes. I have this odd feeling that we've over our limit, but the reality is probably that we'll just have to limit our spending for a few months until the computer and freezer are paid for. By then it'll be Christmas and we can JUST START OVER.

It's Your Call

More baseball questions! This time there is a bonus question, for the simple reason that one of the questions is impossible to get wrong. Yes, absolutely IMPOSSIBLE to get wrong. I included it anyway so you can all try to guess which one it is. You shouldn't have a lot of trouble guessing which one I added. Here's the first:

1. Rainbow Smith of the Arkansas Reds is on third base and Jeremiah Eversole tries a suicide squeeze to bring him home in a close game. Eversole gets the bunt down, but Smith doesn't get a good break from third. The bunt is rolling down the first-base line and as the first baseman tries to field it and make a play at home, Eversole plows him over. The first baseman is unable to make a play at either home or first base. Do you allow the run? Do you call Eversole out for interference? Do you call Smith out because Eversole interfered? Are both runners out? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 5]

By the way, what is this cavalcade of jokes about people not being able to set the timer on the VCR? This is not a problem, trust me. In fact, the only problem with the thing is the instruction booklet's first directive: read the instructions before using. If you tried that, you'd be asleep before you reached page 3. I'm just putting a finishing sentence or three on to this paragraph not three days after we took it home, and I now have it programmed to record Letterman every night so I can watch it when I get home from work, and *The McLaughlin Group* on Saturday afternoons, which I always forget until well after 2PM. The thing can hold eight commands in its memory at one time, so this still leaves six "channels" open for anything else which might come up. No problem!

All this doesn't explain why XL hasn't come out--I could claim bankruptcy, but that'd be pretty lame. Here's what I wrote a couple of months ago:

And as I write, we're up against that old bugaboo, the threatened postal strike. The Conservative's contribution to this ever-present problem was to force the postal unions to amalgamate, essentially trading a bunch of small threatened strikes for one big threat every few years. It used to be that we'd have a threatened postal strike every two weeks, as the Union of Wife-Swapping Postal Screwdriver Straighteners Who Work Only Tuesday Evenings or some other sub-sub-union would start making noise, and the rest of the hundred-odd unions would vow to strike in support of the dozen people whose contracts were up. The Supreme Court ruled a few years ago that Canada Post's unions could not fight labour battles on multi-fronts, and this, I believe, is the first contract dispute since then. I'm torn between hoping for a quick settlement and wishing for immediate total privatization. A vast majority of Canadians, I think, would be behind the government if it decided to do what Reagan did to the air traffic controllers ten years ago. And the great difference is that it is quite

apparent that most of CUPW are not skilled workers, and such a fiasco would not result in any long-term lapses in service.

In any case, with the tight money, I decided to wait until the resolution of the problem. This took longer than I thought it might, as the whole thing was placed on the back burner with a mediator for a few weeks while the government dealt with the civil service strike. Then the mediator suddenly dropped out in disgust, and the government introduced back-to-work legislation. I guess it's about time for me to go back to work as well, even though I am not sure that this is finished. CUPW is such a militant union (and Canada Post's management is, admittedly, pretty hard line) that the legislated truce may fall apart at any time--I wouldn't put it past CUPW leader Jean-Claude Parrot to issue a fill-the-jails order, but for now the mail is moving.

So that's what's been happening: here are a few odds and ends I wrote earlier:

My Grade 5 teacher, Mr. Neufeld, was in the habit of giving us mathematical puzzles for small prizes, knowing very well that a quarter went a long way with ten-year-olds in 1972. But he never gave out his biggest prize, which was five dollars (a small fortune) for bringing to class a collection of anything at all that we could prove numbered exactly one million. I thought of getting a piece of paper with a thousand dots mimeographed one thousand times, but realized that that would cost money. I didn't think I could draw ten thousand dots on one mimeograph master without a loss in clarity which might result in a stray dot here or there. Eventually I came away with the idea that a million is a bloody large number, which of course was Mr. Neufeld's purpose in offering the prize. Even though he never knew I had thought seriously about it (because I wanted to surprise him) it was a valuable lesson, one that would serve well in today's world of billion-dollar deficits and million-dollar athletes.

But consider this. My new printer has a graphics mode that can do 360

dpi horizontally, and 270 dpi vertically, which over 80 square inches (that's a standard 8½ by 11 inch sheet with a half-inch at the top and bottom and quarter-inch margins), using no electronic marvel to do the multiplication, comes to 7,776,000 dots. They'd be difficult to count, but a patterned display could show only every sixth dot, which would lower the count to 1,296,000 dots. It wouldn't be too hard to change the borders to make this 1,000,000 exactly. If I've time I'll see if I can manage this and copy it for you on the back of the addenda sheet.

Mr. Neufeld's five dollars is safe, though. He retired about the same time as dot-matrix printers began to replace daisy wheels and teletypes. He must have seen the danger they represented.

And I must tell you a bridge story I call The Worst Defense Of All Time.

ROCKY

♠ J9876 ♥ 82 ♦ KT9763 ♣ ---

♠ K ♥ AJT93 ♦ 54 ♣ AKT53
MCBRUCE

I opened a heart, Rocky bid a spade (the diamonds are longer but the hand hasn't enough strength for a two-level response), I rebid two clubs. At this point Rocky should realize that we're on a misfit and "prefer" by bidding two hearts. Instead he bid two diamonds, and after we both rebid our minors I got to play the ludicrous contract of 3NT, which is just short of impossible. After the ♦Q lead, I counted my tricks: three. I needed only six more, and the only advantage I had was the opposition: easily the club's worst pair. Still, it was hard to see how anyone could contrive to hand me six tricks. Little did I know I'd be handed eight more!

I started by ducking the opening lead. Looking at it now, I don't know why I did this, but it did set the scene as the ♠A (obviously singleton) was played by RHO. Now she led the ♠5, on which I played the king, and LHO, thinking I had the queen with it, ducked! I now led the ♠5, and, after some thought, with three diamonds to the jack remaining, for some odd reason LHO played the jack. RHO did show

out, so it was entirely illogical for LHO to duck, and after only three tricks they'd turned an easy +300 into a -400. After running the five diamonds (discarding down to the high clubs and ♥AJT9 in hand), I led the ♥8 from the board, ducked it, and lost to the queen. After some more of what passes for thought, my brilliant LHO led another heart and I made eleven tricks on this abomination!

OK folks, this is impressive. We saw the movie that won Best Picture last year, in a theatre, for less than a dollar per hour. Even when you find out that *Dances With Wolves* was quite long--3:15--this is quite impressive. We saw it on a half-price Tuesday in a 110-seat theatre, one-quarter full at 5PM, for \$3. Not bad, huh?

Not bad is an understatement. I did make one bad error though. If you haven't yet seen *Dances With Wolves* and get the chance to do so, I suggest you bring your own food (I suggest that you do this no matter what movie you see, cheapskate that I am), and most important, don't plan on eating any of it until the movie is at least 30 minutes old. If you do like I did and bite into a sub just as the lights dim, you may have to call the food, and perhaps the whole outing, a total

BASEBALL QUIZ continued
[continued from page 3]

2. With the bases loaded and two outs, Warren "Buddy" Budlong hurries home with the potential tying run as Jason Cornell hits a sharp grounder in the hole between third and shortstop. The third baseman makes a diving stop and scrambles up and attempts to tag Ople Wright, the runner coming in from second. Wright retreats to second base and the third baseman flips the ball to the shortstop who makes the tag. In the meantime, Budlong has crossed the plate before the tag was made. Do you count the run since it scored before the tag and since the third baseman chose not to make the force play at third? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 6]

Canadian Content

[Leacock's first book of short sketches was his most popular, not to say that his career went downhill, but because for his debut book he could select from ten years of writings for various magazines. This is the first sketch from that book. Keep in mind that the financial institutions of 1910 were quite different from today's bright, user-friendly, electronic banks.]

My Financial Career by Stephen Leacock

When I go into a bank I get rattled. The clerks rattle me; the wickets rattle me; the sight of the money rattles me; everything rattles me.

The moment I cross the threshold of a bank and attempt to transact business there, I become an irresponsible idiot.

I knew this beforehand, but my salary had been raised to fifty dollars a month and I felt that the bank was the only place for it.

So I shambled in and looked timidly round at the clerks. I had an idea that a person about to open an account

must needs consult the manager.

I went up to a wicket marked "Accountant." The accountant was a tall, cool devil. The very sight of him rattled me. My voice was sepulchral.

"Can I see the manager?" I said, and added solemnly, "alone." I don't know why I said "alone."

"Certainly," said the accountant, and fetched him.

The manager was a grave, calm man. I held my fifty-six dollars in a crumpled ball in my pocket.

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 5]

3. The Butte Copper Kings has Sam Mejias on first base when Heine Meine, a.k.a. "The Count Of Luxembourg," fouls a pitch off. Pocatello pitcher Porky Odom receives a new ball from the umpire and as he is walking up the pitcher's mound he notices that Mejias has retouched and is already taking a big lead. Odom quickly fires over and picks Mejias off. Is Mejias out? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 12]

DIPGAB continued from page 5

loss--the first scene is a real lose-your-cookies type.

The other piece of advice I have is to see it in a theatre. VCRs are great for movies--but not this one. This one requires the big screen; it is painful to imagine it being played out on somebody's portable TV somewhere. We really got the best possible--a tiny theatre without the throngs of people that would have been there had we decided on the evening showing. Movies in Vancouver are odd--used to be that you'd go downtown and stalk Granville St., where there was a concentration of large 50's-60's theatres. Then in the mid 70's the first multi-theatre house was built (one large room, two medium sized rooms and three tiny rooms), and that began the shift to multi-room complexes in the late 70's. A decade later, the new trend is to get out of the downtown core and into the suburban malls. You go to the suburbs to see the first-run

flicks while jostling in the uncomfortable modern (read: small) seats with unknown neighbours and fighting with basketball players in front of you for sightlines, and you go downtown to see second-run films for half-price, usually in a traditional-sized room with comfortable seats for you, your girl, and both your coats. I can't see paying \$8 to have adolescents drive me up the wall for three hours.

So, as I make a restart on this issue in mid-November, I've got to finish the DipCon report (this explains any memory lapses, but don't believe me if I try to tell you I won...) and the letter column, and it already looks might largish. Forgive me if I do a squeeze job on the report or on the baseball answers: I may not have enough space to print everyone's responses this time--might be better if I summarize them. I'm hoping for another issue in mid-December, which you might get by January.

"Are you the manager?" I said. God knows I didn't doubt it.

"Yes," he said.

"Can I see you," I asked, "alone?" I didn't want to say "alone" again, but without it the whole thing seemed self-evident.

The manager looked at me in some alarm. He felt that I had an awful secret to reveal.

"Come in here," he said, and led the way to a private room. He turned the key in the lock.

"We are safe from interruption here," he said. "Sit down."

We both sat down and looked at one another. I found no voice to speak.

"You are one of Pinkerton's men, I presume," he said.

He had gathered from my mysterious manner that I was a detective. I knew what he was thinking, and it made me worse.

"No, not from Pinkerton's," I said, seeming to imply that I came from a rival agency.

"To tell the truth," I went on, as if I had been prompted to lie about it, "I am not a detective at all. I have come to open an account. I intend to keep all my money at this bank."

The manager looked relieved but still serious; he concluded now that I was the son of Baron Rothschild or a young Gould.

"A large account, I suppose," he said.

"Fairly large," I whispered. "I propose to deposit fifty-six dollars now and fifty dollars a month regularly."

The manager got up and opened the door. He called to the accountant.

"Mr. Montgomery," he said unkindly loud, "this gentleman is opening an account, he will deposit fifty-six dollars. Good morning."

I rose.

A big iron door stood open at the side of the room.

"Good morning," I said, and stepped into the safe.

"Come out," said the manager coldly, and showed me the other way.

I went up to the accountant's wicket and poked the ball of money at him with a quick convulsive movement as if I were doing a conjuring trick.

My face was ghastly pale.

"Here," I said, "deposit it." The tone of the words seemed to mean, "Let us do this painful thing while the fit is on us."

He took the money and gave it to another clerk.

He made me write the sum on a slip and sign my name in a book. I no longer knew what I was doing. The bank swam before my eyes.

"Is it deposited?" I asked in a hollow, vibrating voice.

"It is," said the accountant.

"Then I want to draw a cheque."

My idea was to draw out six dollars of it for present use. Someone gave me a cheque-book through a wicket and someone else began telling me how to write it out. The people in the bank had the impression that I was an invalid millionaire. I wrote something on the cheque and thrust it in at the clerk. He looked at it.

"What! are you drawing it all out again?" he asked in surprise. Then I realized that I had written fifty-six instead of six. I was too far gone to reason now. I had a feeling that it was impossible to explain the thing. All the clerks had stopped writing to look at me.

Reckless with misery, I made a plunge.

"Yes, the whole thing."

"You withdraw your money from the bank?"

"Every cent of it."

"Are you not going to deposit any more?" said the clerk astonished.

"Never."

An idiot hope struck me that they might think something had insulted me while I was writing the cheque and that I had changed my mind. I made a wretched attempt to look like a man with a fearfully quick temper.

The clerk prepared to pay the money.

"How will you have it?" he asked.

"What?"

"How will you have it?"

"Oh"—I caught his meaning and answered without even trying to think—"in fifties."

He gave me a fifty-dollar bill.

"And the six?" he asked dryly.

"In sixes," I said.

He gave it me and I rushed out.

As the big door swung behind me I caught the echo of a roar of laughter

[conclusion on page 8]

Editorial

There used to be a time when a publisher could trust *The Zine Register* to be a useful free ad for his zine, whether his zine was good or bad, large or small, regular or sporadic, liked or disliked. Over the past year, the apparent purpose of *The Zine Register* has changed from a place where hobby zines are listed and given a short description, to a depository of zine reviews. People in this hobby seem to prefer to have somebody else tell them whether or not they should give a zine a try, rather than just asking for a sample and making the decision for themselves. Zine reviews as they are currently written tell you what is wrong with a zine quite graphically, while the good points get mentioned only as admissions, if at all.

The latest issue of *The Zine Register* is quite impressive. It contains oodles of stuff, including zine reviews from about a dozen different people. New editor Garrett Schenck has pitched in with comments on most as well. The fact that it looks so damn great made it a real letdown when I found the entry for XL and discovered I'd been trashed for calling attention to the variants I've wanted to start for a while now. I thought that a high profile plug might just get enough people interested enough to try them out. But then I look a column over and see that Garrett thinks "anyone who wants to play here is nuts," and Phil Reynolds writes that "XL makes me yawn." Somehow I get the idea that I might have been better off not advertising the game openings, but, hey, I thought that this was a function of the hobby's zine listing service. Apparently it never occurred to Garrett that I was concerned by the lack of games going on in this zine and wanted to do something to restore the balance. But, you see, in the New Hobby Order, this is a no-no, because I've acquired the reputation as a Bad GM, so therefore everyone should be warned that they are nuts to play here. And if I'm smart, I will recognize that my reputation has been established for the end of time and give up GMing altogether.

The criticism didn't stop there, but I think that I have had a rough

time recently in scheduling and layout, so I can't complain about the slams there, and if my topics bore Phil I guess he has every right to say so if he wants his name in lights as Mr. Zine Reviewer. But the hobby of the '90s sure is hell-bent on tough criticism: even the top-ranked zines have taken pot-shots from reviews recently. There's even argument in the *Zine Register* about other people's reviews and how good or bad they were. You know what we're discovering from these insightful comments? Everybody's view is different!

Well, I've always understood that. That's why I tend to keep my mouth shut unless something's really good or really sucks.

Having been thus trashed, one obvious question is: should I give up Diplomacy as a part of the zine? I seem to have limited options:

1) Continue to try to fill the Silent Seven, Seismic and Road Trip games. The chances of success are not good here, and probably have been decimated by the reviews in *The Zine Register*.

2) Switch to something simpler like Gunboat, with the occasional Regular Dip Opening. This might work if the "avoid McBuce" ZR campaign looks the other way for a while.

3) Try to locate guest GMs to run games in XL. This hasn't worked in the past, but then I haven't picked the greatest people as Guest GMs either.

4) Forget Diplomacy altogether.

Listen folks, I don't mean this as a threat, but without the games this zine has very little interest for me. I don't want signups out of sympathy, I want you to tell me how I can get more people playing. Garrett will probably use some of this editorial as material to be quoted and laughed at by the Turbo Freaks, but I don't care, I've given up on the ZR. I prefer not to give up on XL, even if some already have.

---[LEACOCK, continued from page 7]---
that went up to the ceiling of the bank. Since then I bank no more. I keep my money in cash in my trousers pocket and my savings in silver dollars in a sock.

[from *Literary Lapses* (1910)]

Toronto '91

I won't give you the usual long DipCon report, just a few snippets from a long report that I abandoned because of lack of space and too much elapsed time.

I did manage to win a game before the Con began...

A game of *Kremlin* was begun, with myself, Patrick Fleming, and about three first-time players, including Randolph Smyth, who eventually had the second best shot at winning it. In ten years, the Party Chief was controlled by me for six and Patrick for four, and out of this we got a miserable total of three waves, so the game went into overtime, where the controller of the Party Chief after the Funeral Commission in Year Eleven is declared the winner. I made Randolph a deal in which the Party Chief I controlled would rehabilitate four hacks from Siberia, costing him twenty years of age, making it about 50-50 whether he would survive the health phase die roll. In return, Randolph would promise not to try to Purge the Party Chief in Year Eleven with the KGB Chief he controlled, plus the cards he might use to make that easier. Since I controlled the Party Chief and the Foreign Minister and Randolph controlled the KGB and Defense Ministers, his guy would go up if the Party Chief rolled another small number (and this particular Russkie had managed to roll for me a feeble string of broken wrists and sudden attacks of the flu in four successive October Parades) and died. Luckily, I managed to roll a 16 and lived to tell you all about it.

Friday night didn't go too well for me...

Drew Russia in the first game, and although I didn't know it at the time, two of the steadiest players on the board were the two I couldn't reasonably call neighbours, France (Bob Odear) and Italy (Bob Hartwig). The opening negotiations with my neighbours went something like this:

Turkey (Eric Newhouse) wanted to get right into the Med as soon as possible, a stand-off in Bla, real or staged, was not apparently in his vocabulary. He would be very inter-

ested in going after Austria, but who wouldn't, playing Turkey?

Austria (Bill LaFosse) was probably the best player in our area of the board, which was why I allied with Turkey to start. He wanted my assurance that I would not move to Galicia. I gave this early on, and then gave it again and again and again, even after I had decided to go there. "So you're not going to Galicia?" "No." "Can I trust you?" "No." I should have reasoned that all the extra third degree meant that he was being tipped off, but this didn't occur to me at the time.

Germany (Patrick Fleming) acted as though we weren't even neighbours. My request for a DMZ in Pru/Sil/Bal was waived aside as standard and expected. I suggested A Kie-Hol as opposed to A Kie-Den, for obvious reasons; he said he was thinking seriously about it. This sounded to good to be true: either he was not worried about me at all, or he was coming at me from the start.

With England (Larry Peery), I pointed out that a Russian army in Norway was a great insurance policy against attack from Russia in the long run. Larry's probably heard that argument several hundred times: he said he'd prefer me to head south. He said that he thought France and Germany were in cahoots, which I've heard several times in my somewhat smaller experience, but this time I was able to assure him that this could not be true, since Fleming is not an alliance player (preferring to stab whenever possible). How wrong I was!

In Spring 1901 I opened to GBo, Ukr, Gal, and Rum. Germany opened to Hol and did not attack. England moved to Yor, Nth and Nwg. Turkey went to Bul, Ank, and to Con with the fleet. Austria moved to Ser, Alb and Tri. Italy moved to Ion, Apu and either held in Ven or stood off somebody somewhere. I don't remember exactly what France did.

So far so good. Sweden was assured, Rumania almost certain, and I had a guess at which Austrian centre to go for. Turkey told me to go for it, either one, and he'd be there soon to help out. We agreed that it would be better not to talk too much before this move in order to make it more difficult for the others to recognize

the Russia-Turkey alliance. In retrospect, this was a bad idea, since with War-Gal and the lack of a bounce in Bla it was already out in the open, and a bit of imagination could have ensured that Austria would be even worse off than it turned out. Bill's options were A Tri-Vie, A Ser-Bud, and I wouldn't get any Austrian centre, but Eric might get Ser. Or, more likely, Bill could do the self-stand-off in Bud, from Ser and Tri, which would leave open Vie, and probably keeps Ser. It seems to me that with two centres certain I'd have been better off to give Eric a shot at a second build: A Gal S Aus A Ser-Bud with A Bul-Ser would contain the Austrian well.

What happened was even worse. Left to myself, I tried A Gal-Vie, but stupidly didn't follow it up with A Ukr-Gal, preferring instead to support myself in Rum. The guess was right, but the tactics were wrong. I had seven centres, but the alliance was clear to all, and Italy had moved in for his share of Austrian goodies (or so we thought).

Also in Fall 1901, Larry Peery NMRd by placing into the box a list of his units sans destination spaces. This led to another mistake by yours truly--building a north coast fleet. I should have built two southern armies and a fleet in StP(sc)--attacking England was futile with all three of his units facing me, whereas I was going to need help defending Sweden in 1902. I still didn't believe that there could be a France-Germany alliance, and my poor reading of the western situation cost me a lot. The other wild card that went against us in Spring 1902 was Italy. Bob Hartwig is not blind--he saw that the elimination of Austria would likely put him next on the Russia-Turkey hit list, and so he helped Austria recover. In 1902 I lost Vienna, in 1903 I lost Sweden, and after 1904 I was back to my original four and fighting for survival. By this time, the France-Germany alliance had completely taken out England, and were threatening me in the north and Bob in the south. My Turkish ally had conspired with Austria to take Rum from me, and it was obviously time to talk. I presented a convincing picture of Russia overrun by France and Germany, defending her-

self only against her former allies until France and Germany were in a position to force the two-way. This desperate line was bought, and the four of us decided to work together against the West.

The final hitch in this came a few seasons later, when Turkey announced that he need another centre. For what, we asked, pointing out that he alone was not in a position to fight in the front lines: his part in the alliance was to support from behind and refrain from taking centres in order that the fight could continue. He wanted to grow, he whined. Since the centre in question was Sevastopol, I was not real happy about this, especially since it was getting late. Predictably, my defenses collapsed, and I began proposing draws in order to get the tiny difference between a survival and an elimination. When Turkey refused to accept any draws excluding him, I arranged to get back Sev with Austrian help, and he retaliated by taking an Austrian centre in the Balkans, just as Germany was about to crumble under the bulk of the pressure. We finally proposed a three-way F/G/T draw in exasperation, and it was vetoed--by Turkey! There seemed like no alternative but to accept that we were going to have to turn again and eliminate Turkey just to get to bed before 4 AM, but then a France-Turkey draw was proposed and accepted: Germany was worried about a stab and wanted a good-sized survival. It was the kind of draw you vote yes to while holding your nose, and three of us left vowing to get revenge on Mr. Turkey if we could.

...but recovered nicely on Saturday afternoon...

I was a little late for the Saturday morning breakfast, but there was enough food for a small army, so I didn't miss out. Upstairs in the Dip room, Cal White was discovering how difficult it is to put boards together with a minimum of people who have played in the same game before. I was placed on a board with the two players who had shared the F/T draw in my game of the night before. Bob Odear seemed not to mind, but Eric Newhouse swung into frantic action to get himself re-assigned when he learned that I (Bob Odear didn't seem to worry him) was on his board, as though I'd attack him

right off or something. It would depend on what countries we'd drawn, but I must admit I would certainly have started by telling the whole board that he got a two-way draw, and continued by explaining the unpleasant details. It's not real nice to attack someone because he has been successful earlier, but if there is someone in your game who will make it possible, likely even, for someone else to win, in order to grab a few dots, I have no problem with hitting on him with whatever means are at your disposal. But no way would I go gung-ho after him from the start, without any reason to do so. Normally I'd feel insulted by this type of thing, but I was happy to get him off our board. I drew France, Bob Odear drew England, Graham Wilson drew Italy, and Doug Acheson drew Germany, an event that usually gets wargers going among the other six players over where Doug's last unit will be removed from. Martyn Phillips drew Russia, but beyond that my memory has totally failed me.

I have spent almost all of my face to face games as France trying to get the Hey Bresto strategy to work successfully. This is the English-French alliance with a twist: England occupies Brest in Fall 1901, with French permission. This works to the benefit of both parties: neither can conduct a really lethal stab on the other, and once the alliance is firmly rooted, with Germany falling, and Italy and Russia under attack, the English fleet may be moved around to participate in the attack on Italy, Brest remaining under English control. France may retake Brest, but then has to worry about the English fleet trailing back to Iberia. England may try opening A Lpl-Wal, but then will not get Brest and will be without an ally when France spills the beans. The theory is that both parties are forced to keep the alliance going by the very agreement that appears to the rest of the board to be indicative of bad relations. In practice it takes a very patient France (the wild-card 1901 centre, Belgium, seldom falls France's way--even when under apparent attack from England, most Germanys will contest it, which puts France a centre behind from the start), and a well-timed attack on Italy, or France will get bogged down battling Germany.

This in turn requires an England that is willing to forego the early advantage of a centre or two in the alliance (because the fact is that England cannot use this advantage against France effectively without seeing the basis of the alliance crumble immediately--once France panics and retakes Brest, it is bad for both parties), in order to help his ally gain parity in the first fight against Germany.

My great weakness is not in the bias I have for this alliance, but in overestimating the English player in deciding to try it. Nevertheless, I thought Bob Odear would be perfect for this role: he had played a sound alliance game the night before with a wild ally. But in our first talk, I kept quiet, knowing that Doug would probably declare an all-out attack on England (he does this to everyone--he'd already told me enough to get me to write A Mar S A Par-Bur). In our second talk, Bob sounded like he needed a friend, and I suggested that I would seriously not be offended by F Lon-Eng. Bob said that this was something that could form the basis of a good alliance, and I let him in quickly on the basis of the Hey Bresto strategy. It was on.

The first hurdle as France is how to react to the offensive (supposedly) F Lon-Eng, and then F Eng-Bre. You don't want to overact, but you do want it known that you're not happy with the situation. With three people from previous CanCons in the game, I decided to not react at all, and just make sure I was seen to be trying desperately to negotiate a settlement as the fake English treachery developed. The key here is not Germany's reaction, but Italy's. You want to encourage Italy to go after Turkey or Austria or whoever, and not to worry about the only French build being a southern fleet. You can't beat England without two fleets, Brest is occupied, and you can't build one in Paris, is the line to take. If Italy believes it and builds an army, you can be in WMe and Gly in Spring 1902, with England moving down to MAO and then NAF, and Italy is helpless. Graham was dubious, however, and built a second fleet, which meant I would have to wait for a better opportunity to attack. In the end the battle against Italy was not fully resolved, but Bob

did help me persuade Graham to turn around once, and there was a short truce before Graham and I came to the conclusion that it couldn't last and simultaneously broke it. I think our side would have won it given time, but the game ended before we had a chance to play that theatre out.

Starting in 1902 it became apparent that everyone except Turkey had sharpened the knives for the slaughter of Germany. Bob and I took control of Holland and Belgium, Italy and Austria threatened Munich, and Russia sailed into the Baltic. This battle lasted for a while, as always when the eastern powers get involved before you want them to, but we eventually won it, and when this became clear, it wasn't that long before the draw proposals began. I was quite happy with a two-way, even with the short end, and Bob was quite happy with a second two-way, so we shook hands after about seven game years.

I do however want to make mention of one exciting coup pulled off by Bob Odear, one which I sadly failed to appreciate fully when it occurred, and one for which I'd like to nominate him for the Koning Award. In a Fall season around 1905, the Germans were on their last legs: armies in Kiel and Munich. Russia controlled Berlin,

England had Denmark and Holland, and I had armies in Ruhr, Burgundy, and Belgium. Bob suggested early on in the negotiating period that we swap Hol and Bel, with his F Eng slipping in behind as I went from Bel-Hol: he would then support my A Ruh-Kie from Denmark and also move F Hol-Hel to make way. Then he went off to talk with Russia. With only a few minutes left in the negotiating period, I realized that I could be being set up for a stab if he supported Russia into Kiel instead and "forgot" to move out. In a nice way, I pointed this out, and suggested I'd feel better with a look at his orders. He said "let me have a look at the board", and walked back, as I followed. Somebody said that we had a half a minute. Martyn Phillips, the Russian player, was right beside us. For Bob, the situation was a nightmare, because he had just finished telling Martyn he was going to support him into Kiel, and had planned to support me instead! "Can I just ask you to trust me this time?" he asked desperately. My look told him that this was the wrong thing to say at this point. "OK, look," he said, showing me the order sheet as Martyn looked on. "I didn't want to tell you all this, but here it is: the deal is that I'm going to support the Russian into Kiel."

I looked. The order (we were playing that multinational supports need not be spelled out) was written clearly: F Den S Ruh-Kie. Pressure of the moment, I guess, because it didn't register--the Ruh was too close to "Russian" and my head was spinning. "How can you do this?" I said, quite amazed that I was (I thought) being stabbed and told about it!

Now, for his part, Bob thinks that I do understand and am playing along for Martyn's benefit. "Just trust me," he says, as he folds the order sheet up.

But I don't understand! He's on my side, he's shown me the orders, and has brilliantly tried to keep the ball in play for Russia's benefit, and I am too paranoid to be able to read properly! "Wait a second here," I say, "how can this possibly benefit us?"

Back to Bob's point of view: total panic, I should guess. "If McBruce is putting on a show," he thinks, "it's way too much of a show. I showed him

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 6]

4. Cincinnati leads the Dodgers by three runs in the top of the ninth in a game at Riverfront Stadium. The Dodgers have the bases loaded when Kirk Gibson singles to right field. Paul O'Neill's throw to the plate is high and gets by catcher Bo Diaz. Schottzie, Reds owner Marge Schott's Saint Bernard, leaps from her first-base box seat and fetches the ball. Like any good dog, Schottzie jumps over the railing and takes the ball to Schott. The owner then fires the ball back to Diaz in time for him to tag the incoming runner, who started on first base. How many runs do you allow and is the runner Diaz tagged out? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 19]

the orders, what more does he want--he seems to think I'm still stabbing him." Then the solution hits: "I'll show him the orders again: maybe he misread them." He shows me the orders once more, trying to act like there's a different order at the bottom of the list which clarifies everything. He practically has to shove them under my nose.

This time I read and fully comprehend: F Den S Ruh-Kie. I see the decoy pointed out, and I nod as though I understand. I even glance at Martyn to signal that I have acquiesced, but he's using ears and not eyes like any good Diplomat. I write out my orders in a daze...

Unfortunately, in my admiration for the brilliant play I'd just seen pulled off, I forgot to attack Munich from Burgundy to cut the predicted support. This cost us a year at least, as Kiel did not fall and Germany still had two units, but with an extra unit adjacent in Hel, it was only a matter of time until we broke through. Eventually, before anyone was eliminated or hit really hard (although, as I said, there was a comical simultaneous break in the French/Italian accord which ensured that Italy would not go without a fight), a two-way draw was declared, and I had a decent result.

During this game, Doug Acheson responded to complaints about the scoring system. The complaints were based not on the computation of points from raw results, but which games would be counted. The original flyer said the score would be the sum of your first three games, and the motion was to change this to best three. After a vote showed that the consensus was to change this to best three, the change was adopted. Doug may argue about flexibility and democratic choice, but I think "best three" is akin to saying "if you don't play four you haven't got much chance of doing well," and four games of Dip in a weekend precludes almost everything else. Fred Davis's variant tournament on Saturday night, as well as a number of people's plans to go sight-seeing, died as a result of this poor decision. Players were quick to realize that no matter what they had done up to that point it would be bad to play in only three games overall.

It has been argued that the majority in favour of the change was substantial (as I recall, it was about 70-80%) but we must realize that more than 70-80% of the people in the room had either had a bad result on Friday night, or were headed for one Saturday afternoon, and would be helped by the change. It was a poor decision, but not one which ultimately changed the results significantly.

...and on Sunday I was thrown into a good position and held it nicely...

I woke up late on Sunday. Luckily, I was able to get a spot in a game after 1903: Randolph Smyth had to leave to go to Cats or Les Miz or something. He left me a rock solid Austria in alliance with Italy (Claude Gautron). This worked well until it became clear that Germany (Marc Peters) would be hard to kill, so we settled for a three-way draw (after a typical Peters grab for a few extra centres so he could have a few thousandths of a point more in the ratings.) Amazingly enough, with a two-way, three-way and a survival, I finished tenth overall. Other games were bringing up some interesting results: Gary Behnen won his game to finish on top, Larry Peery won his game (I saw him go up to Cal White and tell him that "it's finally over" and I drew the conclusion that as Turkey he had been eliminated after holding out for awhile: forgive me Larry!), and Bob Odear had I believe another two-or-three way, which put him into third.

There were other interesting happenings as well. Cal and I played a round of pitch & putt on the Tuesday following the weekend--I was no match for him, even though he hit every tee shot about ten degrees to the right and never tried to compensate. Robert Lesco won the Facts In Five contest by amazing us with his knowledge of pharmaceuticals late Saturday afternoon. It was nice meeting a bunch of folks for the first time, and good to see some people I'd met once or twice before. I do hope to get to KC next year, but I realize I will probably need a good boost in the income after spending so much in the past little while.



It's Your Call Answers

Off we go with another set of answers to the spacefilling baseball questions from XL #40. Under various threats and after a few promises I haven't fulfilled yet, Nancy sorted through and typed in your answers this time, for which I thank her. As usual, McB denotes my own comments to distinguish me from that other BM who lives in Saskatoon. (And it isn't Brent responding to people in the letter column, by the way.) Other entries this time came from Randy Davis (RD), Pete Gaughan (PG), Andrew York (AY), Robert Lesco (RL), Eric Brosius (EB) and Malcolm Smith (MS). I don't know how much baseball is played in Norway, but we're about to get some indication...

1. *The Mudville nine is ahead 4-0 after six innings and Casey comes to bat in the top of the seventh and belts a three-run homer. After Casey completes his jaunt around the bases, a downpour of rain comes and rains out the game. Is the final score 7-0 or does the score revert back to the last completed inning and 4-0, leaving the mighty Casey holding the bag? It's your call.*

MS: I would assume that the play would stay at 7-0. I say I can't imagine something like cricket go back to the start of the inning. But hang on, since the Yanks butchered cricket I'll have to assume that they'll have butchered common sense so I'll change my vote to 4-0.

EB: The final score reverts to the last completed inning.

BM: Score reverts because the inning is not complete.

RD: Sorry Casey, maybe next time. 4-0.

RL: I think the game ends the instant the umpire says so (except in a couple of cases) so the homerun stands and the score is 7-0.

AY: Score is 7-0. Whatever the score is when the game is called is the final score (with some exceptions not applicable here).

PG: Generally, the game ends at the moment the umpire calls it. Score it 7-0.

ANSWER: Give Casey his round-tripper. The final score should be 7-0, since the home run did not affect the

outcome of the game. The reverting back rule was removed in 1980. There are no reverting back situations. If, however, Mudville had been trailing and Casey's homer gave his team the lead, the game would be suspended at that point and completed at a later date. If this last situation had occurred in the bottom of the inning, the game would be over.

McB: I suspect the reverting back rule was removed to avoid losing the stats from non-completed games, since Casey's HR would not be in his season total if the reverting back rule had been used. But this is a two-edged sword. If you rule that the stats from a five-inning tie game (a game called between innings that is tied is replayed in its entirety) are not counted, you risk putting a record-breaking achievement in limbo. If you count them, then you risk losing a consecutive game streak because of lack of innings. Either way, there is a tiny risk of a huge controversy.

SCORING: Early lead to Robert, Andrew, and Pete.

2. *A runner is on first base when the ball is hit over the left fielder's head. The second baseman waltzes over toward the bag as the runner on first begins to round second and the two collide. The ball takes a funny bounce and rolls around the left field corner. The runner is able to get up and advance to third, but decides not to attempt to score as the ball comes in to the relay man. Do you allow the runner to score or do you just allow him one base for obstruction on the second baseman? It's your call.*

AY: He remains on third.

MS: If the second baseman is "waltzing" then he must be moving across the field in an odd manner indeed. Therefore I would go for the decision that penalties him.

RL: If I felt that the obstruction prevented the runner from scoring I would award him home plate. It sounds so here so allow him to score.

EB: The umpire may allow the runner to score if, in his judgment, the runner would have scored had there been no interference.

PG: Judgment call - if the ump believes he would've scored without the obstruction, send him home. I think that's the implication here.

BM: I believe the runner scores since he was able to reach third in spite of the obstruction.

RD: Kinda close, ... Run scores.

ANSWER: Obstruction occurred at second base. The runner should score. (Rule 7.06b—If no play is being made on the obstructed runner, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall then call time-out and impose such penalties, if any, that in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.)

SCORING: All are allowed to score, but Andrew misses third and is called out on appeal.

3. Washington's Skip Hatten is on first base and takes off on a hit-and-run play with Jason Cornell at the plate. The pitch is outside. Cornell lunges for the ball and the bat slips out of his hands and toward second base. The catcher on the opposing team throws the ball to second in an attempt to catch Hatten stealing, but the ball hits the bat in midair and sails into center field. Hatten advances to third on the overthrow. Do you allow Hatten to stay at third, put him back at second, or call interference on Cornell? It's your call.

EB: I allow Hatten to stay at third. (Assuming Cornell didn't throw the bat deliberately.)

RD: What the heck, give him third.

MS: Back to second.

AY: First off, I'd like to know if this is possible, since the bat would have had to be launched towards second a significant amount of time before the catcher fields the ball and throws to second -- the bat should have come to a halt before the ball would get to it. In any case, I'd put the runner on first calling interference on the batter.

BM: Interference on Cornell. The hitter needs to retain control of his bat.

RL: Intentional or not, it is interference on Cornell. I would send the runner back to first.

PG: Interference - batter is out, runner sent back.

ANSWER: Call interference, the batter is out. Runners return to their original bases. It does not matter whether the batter's act of throwing the bat was intentional or not. (Rule 6.06c—The batter is out when he interferes with the catcher's

fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter's box or making any other movement that hinders the catcher's play at home base. Rule 6.05h—If a whole bat is thrown into fair territory and interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called whether intentional or not.)

SCORING: Eric and Randy got it wrong, Malc had an interesting idea but still wrong, the rest got it right.

4. Bloody Jake Evans fades back on a deep fly ball and leaps at the fence to catch the long drive. He makes the stab, but as he does, he falls over the fence in fair territory. Home run or out? It's your call.

MS: "Fades back" "stab" - I'm having problems here with your terminology, but I'd say "Homerun".

McB: "Fades back" means to run backwards as an outfielder to avoid having the ball go over your head. "Stabbing" for the ball is the exciting play when a fielder reaches desperately over a fence while in the air for a fly ball.

RD: Home run, since ball not caught in play.

EB: Home run!

RL, AY, BM, and PG: Out.

ANSWER: Out. (Rule 2.00—A CATCH is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in his hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it....A fielder may reach over a fence, railing, rope or other line of demarcation to make a catch. He may jump on top of a railing or canvas even if they are in foul ground.) Runners on base would advance one base. (Rule 7.04c—If the fielder or catcher, after having made a legal catch, should fall into a stand or among spectators or into the dugout after making a legal catch, or fall while in the dugout after making a legal catch, the ball is dead and runners advance one base without liability to be put out.)

McB: As far as I can see, there is nothing specifically prohibiting a player from making a catch while 15 rows up in the stands, except that in stating that it is legal to jump from any field area to a non-field area to make a catch, there is the implication

that you may not leave the field before making the catch.

SCORING: You shouldn't have a lot of trouble figuring out who got it right when the choices are HR or Out. The score so far: PG and RL lead with 4, BM and AY have 3, EB, MS and RD all have 1.

5. Harvard Eddie Grant of the Minneapolis Millers gets caught in a rundown between third and home. The catcher chases Grant back toward third base and throws the ball to the third baseman. As the catcher throws the ball he slips and falls in the baseline. Grant turns to run towards home and trips on the catcher and is tagged by the third baseman. The catcher's fall was accidental and he was not blocking the base path intentionally. Do you call Grant out or do you award the Millers a run because of the obstruction? It's your call.

RD: He's out!

RL: Whether it was an accident or not the runner is obstructed and a run is awarded the Millers.

AY: He gets home, and a run scores.

BM: Give him the run.

EB: Score the run.

PG: Award Grant home.

MS: "Rundown"? A run.

McB: A rundown is a play by a bunch of fielders when they have a runner trapped between bases--they throw the ball back and forth until one guy is close enough to tag him out, and the other runners if any, may advance on the play, which is why the guy in the rundown sometimes drags it out for a while.

ANSWER: Obstruction, score the run, intent is not the question. (Rule 7.06a--If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, such as a rundown, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he touches first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance, without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base he last legally touched before the obstruction.)

SCORING: Local boy RD screws up again! Everyone else gets it right, even the Brit from Norway.

6. With a runner on first base and one out, the ball is popped-up down the third-base line near the dugout. The Iowa Baseball Confederacy's Olcan Flynn rushes over from his third-base position and catches the ball in fair territory. Flynn's momentum carries him into the dugout. Do you allow the runner on first an extra base because Flynn carried the ball out of play, make him stay put, or allow him to advance at his own risk? It's your call.

BM: Tricky. I'd say advance at his own risk because of the infield fly rule, but because he went into the dugout, thereby making the ball dead, I'd say make him stay put.

AY: Assuming that Flynn falls into (rather than steps), the runner is given second.

RD: I'd give him second base.

PG: Ball is dead, no advance. (I think the rules specify you may advance IF fielder remained standing, but the question doesn't say so I presume he fell.)

MS: Allow to advance at his own risk. If the fielder wishes to muck about in the dugout then that's his lookout!

EB: I allow him to advance at his own risk.

RL: I think it is dependant on whether he has fallen or not. If he simply steps into the dugout the runner advances at his peril. If Flynn has fallen, call time & award the runner on first one base.

ANSWER: The ball is in play, everyone is at their peril. The dugout is only out of play on a throw. In professional baseball, players may enter the dugout to make a catch. If the player remains standing the ball is alive and in play. If, after making the catch, the fielder falls in the dugout then all runners would advance one base. This holds true for all dead-ball areas (i.e. bullpens, etc.) You may catch and carry the ball into those areas and the ball remains alive. But, if the fielder falls, then the ball is dead. (Rule 5.10f--When a fielder after making a catch steps into a bench, but does not fall, the ball is in play and runners may advance at their own peril.)

McB: I wonder what the linguistic difference is between advancing "at your own peril" and advancing "at

your own risk." The latter seems more natural to me; to my mind peril is almost archaic. Dragonslayers encounter peril; ballplayers encounter risk. It's just a game.

That's certainly an odd playing field if the third baseman can make a catch in fair territory and then have his momentum carry him into the dug-out. Aren't most dugouts at least 15-20 yards from the foul lines?

SCORING: RL, EB, and MS are correct, PG is correct but gets 0.2 deducted because he assumed that the guy fell when it did not say so. Anticipation as an umpire is not good. The score is RL 6, PG 5.8, BM and AY 4, MS and EB 3, and RD 1.

7. *Hughie "Ee-Yah" Jennings's Detroit Tigers are having a particularly rough time and he's been on your back all day. The Tigers trail 11-2 in the eighth inning when Jennings comes to the plate. You are the first-base umpire. Jennings hits a solo home run and as he rounds first base he lets loose with some choice profane comments about your heritage. He's gotta go, so you toss him out of the game right then and there. But even though you've yanked him between first and second base, he completes the circuit, touching the bases in order. Does the run still count? It's your call.*

MS: Course not! He's out and that's it!

EB: You should wait till he scores to heave him, but if you can't restrain yourself, a substitute runner comes into the game and completes running the bases. The run counts.

RD: You bet. Play isn't finished so the run scores.

RL, AY, PG and BM: Run counts.

ANSWER: Even though you have ejected him immediately, Jennings will be allowed to complete the play (in this case, round the bases). When the play is completed he is done for the day. (Rule 9.01d—If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.)

McB: So why not trot down to home plate and eject him when he gets there? That's what I'd do.

SCORING: MS drops a notch, everyone else gets it right.

8. *Bases are loaded with one out in the bottom of the ninth of a tie game. Steady Pete Morgan walks the batter, who peels off to join the postgame celebration before he reaches first base. Do you allow the runner from third to score the winning run, or should you call the batter out and send the runners back to their bases since the hitter didn't reach first to force them around the bases? It's your call.*

RL: The run counts but the batter is declared out for statistical purposes.

PG: Call him out if the defensive team appeals.

EB: I allow the run to score.

RD: I dunno, but I'll play the hunch and say he's out.

MS: He's out!

AY: In this case I'd call the batter out and continue the game.

BM: Batter is out for leaving the base path. Run does not score.

ANSWER: Spoil the party! Declare the batter out and send the runner back to third. (Rule 6.08a—The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out provided he advances to and touches first base when four balls are called by the umpire. A batter who is entitled to first base because of a base on balls must go to first base and touch the base before other runners are forced to advance. Rule 4.09b—When the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game, or in the last half extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter, or other award of bases, with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home and the batter-runner has touched first base.)

McB: Doesn't that first bit seem to indicate that the other runners are advancing at their own risk if they leave before the batter touches first? Obviously this is erroneous.

SCORING: RD, MS, AY, and BM have it right. EB is wrong, PG is wronger, and RL is wreally wrongest! The runner's out in the stats, but the winning run scores? What does the newspaper say tomorrow morning? "Three out when winning run scored???" I'll give them

all zero, but in RL's case this is generous...

9. Joe Hardy is a nervous rookie in class A ball. He hits a looping fly ball to short right field that falls in. Hardy, not wanting anybody else to use his precious bat, carries it with him as he slides safely in for a double. Do you let the double stand or do you send Hardy and his precious bat back to the dugout? It's your call.

RD: Don't know if class 'A' has different rules for this, so I say he's out.

BM: Hardy is out.

MS: Back to dugout.

PG: Let him stay at second and make him return the bat to the dugout.

RL: I don't have any problem with him hanging on to his bat.

EB: I let the double stand.

AY: The double stands.

ANSWER: Hardy is OK, albeit weird. Give him a double. Fall back on Rule 9.01c—there is no rule stating the batter-runner cannot carry the bat. If in your judgment it did not hinder, confuse, or impede the defense, Hardy is OK.

McB: And why not? They do it in baseball's precursor, cricket, all the time...

SCORING: ...except for the unfortunate detail that the question stated that Hardy slid into second. This is a strong implication that there was a play at second, and although spikes are an accepted intimidation factor in favour of the sliding runner, I think a bat is taking things too far, so my decision is to allow a half-point minimum on this question. I'd have no hesitation in calling him out if the throw was to second. But if there was just a token throw, cut off by the second baseman nowhere near the bag, I'd just give him a warning. The score with one question left: RL 8, PG 7.8, AY 7, BM 6.5, EB 5, MS 4.5, RD 3.5.

10. You've made it to the big time and you're umpiring a World Series game. Cincinnati leads the Yankees by four runs in the bottom of the eighth inning when New York rallies for three runs and has the bases loaded. The score is now 6-5, there are still no outs, and a heavy rain begins to fall. Before you and your crew can stop the game a Yankee hitter

singles and knocks in two runs to give New York the lead. The rain falls even harder and the game is stopped with no outs in the bottom of the eighth. The game is washed out. Do the Yankees, who are leading 7-6, win, or do you revert back to the last completed inning and award the Reds a 6-2 victory? It's your call.

EB and RD: Reds win.

BM: Revert to the last complete inning.

PG: Playoffs + World Series games must be nine innings - resume from the point where play was suspended.

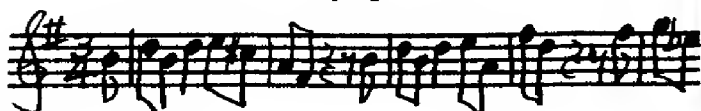
RL, AY, and MS: The Yankees win.

ANSWER: As we said in answer number 1 in this section, there is no longer any "reverting back". The Yanks would win this one 7-6. (Rule 4.11—The score of a regulation game is the total number of runs scored by each team at the moment the game ends; 4.11d—A called game ends at the moment the umpire terminates play. Exception: If the game is called while an inning is in progress and before it is completed, the game becomes suspended if: (1) the visiting team scores one or more runs in that half-inning, to tie the score and the home team has not taken the lead; (2) the visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, in its half-inning, and the home team has not taken the lead.) The Yankees took the lead in its home half of the inning. They win.

McB: Mild jock-type grammatical error there: shouldn't that read "The Yankees took the lead in their home half of the inning?"

SCORING: There are no special rules in the suspended games section concerning playoff or World Series games, so Pete is wrong, as are the Reds supporters. The final standings in reverse order: RD 3.5, EB 5, MS 5.5, BM 6.5, PG 7.8, AY 8, and Robert Lesco wins (despite the ludicrous answer on #8) with 9. The minimum of 30 is what your right answers get divided by to form your standings percentage if you haven't answered enough.

[Standings on page 20]



Contest Results

The mystery words from the page tops of #40 sorted themselves out as follows, taking the words in order (page 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.) and denoting the sentences they fit into in brackets:

CABLOOP (21) is a noun or verb referring to a taxi driver's attempt to raise the fare by way of extending the length of the route. The noun refers to the habit or the route itself. A painting done on a ceiling is a **CEILO-PITTURA** (11). A **CONNOIZER** (25) is somebody who thinks he's a connoisseur but clearly isn't--the word's pronunciation is the way a connoiser would pronounce connoisseur. **COVIVANT** (45) is a wonderfully bilingual term for a live-in lover. A **CROTCHOCRAT** (13) is a lobbyist for a minority who recognizes and acts upon the fact that the minority's power ultimately depends upon their birth rate. Any attempt to use fingers as a standard of measurement is an example of **DACTYLOMETRY** (31). The annoying sound made by someone carrying a balloon on a stick, as well as the act of bouncing it up and down, is known as **DOONICKING** (23). **FORELOG** (39) is simply the opposite of backlog. A hotel or motel that allows its guests to save money with an hourly rate is a **FORNICATORIUM** (35). A **GNURN** (29) is some ornament, especially on an expensive car, that has no practical value. **G'ORCH** (5) is a contraction of "Go, orchestra" and was coined by a high-school music teacher to end rehearsals. Fear of banging

your recently injured foot is **IMPACTI-PEDIPHOBIA** (47). **KLICKAGE** (33) is metric mileage (a kilometer--accent correctly placed on the first syllable--is often called a "klick," as in "only fifty-seven klicks to Moose Jaw"). **LECTAQUAPHOBIA** (9)? Fear of waterbeds! Someone who doesn't like to walk without having a bite to eat on the way is a **MASTICAMBULISTIPHILE** (43). **MATRESSIDE** (3) is what you do to the old mattress when you buy a new one. An **OMNIBIBULOUS** (27) person will drink anything. When somebody unfamiliar with a word mispronounces it, they commit a **PEKILAR** (15). (The word comes from the Manitoba school system, circa 1920, when an illiterate government inspector for the Education Ministry was welcomed at a northern school and asked to give a spelling test. All the students got 19/20 when he mispronounced the word "peculiar"!)

PWELGAS (41) is an acronym for the Seven Deadly Sins: look 'em up: the acronym hasn't helped me to remember them all... **REXILE** (17) refers to royalty in exile. **RIGGAFRUTCH** (7) is an inoffensive swear word that is satisfying to utter. The **VOLNIC** (37) is a fictitious part of a car's motor that can be adjusted with an equally fictitious tool called a gatahvitz, when a customer insists that something is wrong, not realizing that the something is him or her. And **SES-QUIGUOUS** (19) refers to something that has two possible meanings, one of which is more likely than the other.

Four people sent entries, and on a percentage basis Brent McKee won with 8/10, but unfortunately I'm scoring by how many you got right. The other three sent guesses for all twenty-three: Mike Barno and Rosie Roberts both scored 17/23, with Pete Gaughan close behind at 16/23. So that's a dollar to Rosie and Mike's accounts.

This time the quiz is on French baseball terms. On the right hand page tops are the French terms, and on the left-hand page tops are the English equivalents, defined, for those of you who do not follow baseball. (One of the English ones is a decoy, because the cover page gives us an odd number of page tops to fill.) Anyone scoring 80% or better on this quiz is fully qualified to turn the sound up

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 12]

5. Dirty Al Gallagher hits a long, high drive that appears to be heading out of the park. A Chicago outfielder scales the wall, however, and pulls himself up onto the scoreboard where he makes the catch, balancing himself on top of the wall and leaning on the scoreboard. Does Gallagher touch them all or beat a hasty retreat to the dugout and tip his hat to the acrobatic outfielder? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 20]

if the only ballgame on the tube is les Expos en français! And if you don't do too well, you can learn quickly by watching and listening. (Even with Blue Jay Bandwagon Crowding starting up, you can still get more Expos broadcasts in most Canadian cities--if you are bilingual.) «Au jeu!» ("Play Ball!")

If we get enough responses, it might be interesting to compare foreigners, Americans, unilingual Anglos, and bilingual Canadiens. \$2.00 sub credit to the winner, but if Gautron, Arsenault, Touchette, and Belanger all get a perfect score, we may have to think about a second prize!

I must append a late note that the book I am getting these from has no entry relating to 55-tonne concrete beams falling off 16 year old stadiums, and in fact baseball in la belle province may be history, but we'll go ahead with this anyhow, and hope the Expos will be able to play in Montreal next season.



BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 19]

6. E.T.A. Whittaker is on third base and is taking his lead in foul territory when Scrappy "Dirtbrain" Hawthorn hits a wicked grounder in Whittaker's direction. Whittaker retreats toward the bag. When he reaches the base, the ball strikes him and bounds into foul territory. Fair ball, foul ball, is the runner on third out? What about the batter? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 20]

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 20]

7. Bottom of the eighth inning of the finale of the '92 ALCS, and the score is tied at the Skydome. Jays have runners on first and third, one out. With a squeeze play on, the runner breaks from third, and Carter squares to bunt--a feeble pop just in front of home plate. The Mariners catcher fields the ball just in time to see the runner from first perform a beautiful tumble trying to stop and head back to first. In fact, this tumble is so funny that there is no question of the play even being close, so he hams it up before throwing a lob to first for the third out. By now the run-ner breaking from third has been standing on the plate for some time, and he points to the screen so they can all enjoy the replay. The Jays then take the field, and five minutes later the Mariners have gone down 1-2-3. You are the home plate ump, and you're feeling great: you've made not a single mistake so far. What do you do now? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 23]

(FROM PAGE 19)

THE BASEBALL QUESTION STANDINGS (BASED ON A 30 QUESTION MINIMUM.)

UMPIRE	ANSWRD	RIGHT	WRONG	PCT.
R.LESCO	50	42.0	8.0	.840
P.GAUGHAN	50	40.6	9.4	.812
E.BROSIUS	30	19.7	10.3	.657
B.MCKEE	50	31.6	18.4	.632
D.MCCRUMB	20	13.8	6.2	.460
A.YORK	20	13.7	6.3	.457
P.MILEWSKI	20	11.7	8.3	.390
C.WHITE	20	11.1	8.9	.370
R.DAVIS	20	9.4	10.6	.313
M.SMITH	10	5.5	4.5	.183
J.GALT	10	5.4	4.6	.180

Most of the Post

A little messing around with the Works printer drivers made it possible to get a selection of NLQ fonts, which will come in handy here, distinguishing your letters from my responses. So, with Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* and Respighi's *Ancient Airs and Dances* loaded into the cassette players, let's start the...

RAM

...with a fitting tribute to the opening of the National Hockey League's seventy-fifth season. The following is, quite obviously, a Cheap Shot:

KEVIN BROWN: If the postal
Savannah GA strike makes XL
late, will anyone

notice?

BM: I almost gave out two-minutes for sarcastic roughing there, until I saw the appendage "Just Kidding." Still, it was a close call...

Had I gone ahead and printed the zine on time, a lot of you wouldn't have responses in. For example, we wouldn't hear the Continuing Trav-
elogue of Mr...

STEVE HUTTON: "I'll just pack
Vienna, AUSTRIA my bags and
go back to

Vienna where I belong; and somewhere out there is a girl who I think will never be a nun." With this line from *The Sound Of Music* on my lips, and several confused people wondering why I always go on about nuns, I bid farewell to the happy land of Garbo and Bergman.

Before returning to Vienna, I took a brief psychological recovery tour. I stopped in as many countries as possible where people smile, laugh, touch each other, and so on. The highlight was Thailand ("land of the free"), formerly known as Siam ("land of smiles"). I even got to ride an elephant.

Here in Vienna, the Mozart anniversary has been celebrated to death. They even shows films of Mozart operas in the Rathaus Park, a place best known for after-dark sexual encounters. Tourists who wanted to experience Viennese culture could watch a bit of opera, go into the bushes for some sex, go back to see the end of the opera, then cross the street and

have dessert at Cafe Landtmann. I like it here.

My new address is:

Steve Hutton
Matthäusg. 8/9
1030 Wien
AUSTRIA

If your typewriter can't handle ä, you can replace it with ae. [Or even æ! -BM] As a rule, I try to avoid addresses with ä, ö, or ü in them (and ø is right out), but this apartment is spacious (room for visitors!) and near the center of town.

The only problem is with the gas stove. Here are the instructions for lighting a burner:

1. Turn on the gas.
2. Hold the match box in your left hand.
3. Hold a match in your right hand, and strike it against the match box.
4. Set down the match box.
5. With your left hand, push in the button corresponding to the burner and turn it counter-clockwise. **IMPORTANT:** do not remove your left hand from this button until instructed to do so.
6. Move the match so that its flame (which is fast approaching your thumb and middle finger) comes in contact with the gas escaping from the burner.
7. Hold the match in this position until a blue flame surrounds the burner.
8. Plunge your charred thumb, middle finger, and burning match into a basin of cold water, taking care that your left hand remains on the button.
9. Wait 5 seconds.
10. Remove your left hand from the button.
11. Apply first aid as necessary.

I eat out a lot.

My contract in Vienna lasts until the end of June, and my lease runs until the end of August. I expect to start work "somewhere else" next September. If you plan to visit Vienna during the next year, please let me know as far in advance as possible. That way, I can be sure to be away here when you arrive.

BM: I've seen matches that are about a foot long advertised, and now I know what they're for! Unfortunately the nearest K-Mart to Vienna is on the

other side of the Atlantic. But you might find them if you take your charred fingers into a market and make the appropriate gestures...

Why the bilingual address? Doesn't Wien belong with Österreich, and AUSTRIA belong with Vienna?

The only thing worse than trying to type on a foreign typewriter is trying to type on a keyboard that has been changed to the defaults of another country by some program. Try using any version of DOS after some rascal has sneakily told your computer that you're German, which effectively hides the all-important colon and changes all of the keys near where it should be to every combination of vowel plus umlaut, accent, or an apparent multitude of other fuzzy things. (Actually, I should be thankful I don't have to capitalize every noun--do they still do that in German?)

That last bit leads nicely into this lengthy segue into responses to my article on computers from last issue:

ANDREW YORK: I agree with
Universal City TX your commen-
tary about the

'state of the art' in computers. With all of the improvements, only the richest can be in the state of the art all the time, and most of the user's working time will be used acclimating to the new (improved) software. I'm still (more or less) happy with my C-64. I still need to get a decent graphics program (to spice up *RW*, and to do maps). The only thing I really miss is a hard drive so I don't have to load each program as I need to use it.

BM: I'm still not convinced on hard-drives (more later on that), but my main point remains that very, very few of us are doing enough home computing that we need (or will ever need) a 486 in our den. But hark! The 486s are now obsolete! Listen:

KEVIN BROWN: Good article on computers, have you heard that the 586s are coming out soon after New Years? What a prophet you are!

BM: Shall I try to predict the release date of the first 686? Isn't there some natural limit to this progression? The exponential factor is staggering. The 8-bit machines could handle a number limited in (decimal range) from 0 to 255. Eight bits; 11111111 in binary is 255. The 8-bit machine language was not difficult to

understand, even an idiot like me could just grasp it. With the 286s the maximum number becomes 2 to the 16th minus 1, or 65535. The 386s, 32-bit machines, allow you to send any of 4,294,967,296 different codes to the CPU in one fell swoop. The 486 "permutation total" is 18.4 quadrillion. The 586 number runs to 39 decimal digits! This escalation make the arms race look tame by comparison!

BRENT MCKEE: Most of what you
Saskatoon SK wrote is right. I
have an XT which

certainly isn't the most modern machine on the market. If I knew then about what I know now was going to happen to prices, Foster the Computer would be a 286 (or a 386) with a VGA monitor and a 24-pin printer. Still, I don't really need that much power (well maybe the VGA). Of course the XT, the 286, the 386, the 486 (and presumably the 586 that some inventor is even now toiling away at developing) aren't intended for home use but for business use. That they are used at home is more a testimonial to the demand for business "homework" than it is for the actual need for such computing power at home.

The argument about the number of people using computers is, I suspect, the product of the weeding out of computer companies. Ten years or so ago, there were a host of computer companies. Apple, Commodore, Amiga, Texas Instruments, Timex Sinclair, the [Coleco] Adam and a host of other companies were producing machines. Each was searching for a niche in the market, most of them appealing to the hobbyist, or the nonbusiness users, rather than the business types. Business belonged to Big Blue. In the years that passed, a lot of companies went bust. Amiga and Commodore are both trying to find their niche. IBM still focuses on business and Apple, by abandoning development on the Apple II line towards an Apple IV and focusing on the Macintosh business machine, is doing the same thing. My theory is that personal computers and the use of these machines has come to be perceived as a business activity, rather than "fun." If it is seen as work rather than fun, how many people are really going to buy a machine for pleasure? What is needed is a fun, entry level machine to let people

start using them without associating them with WORK.

As to what we do with computers, you are right, nothing has changed that much. There is nothing that we can do with computers that we couldn't do with a typewriter, a calculator, or a pad and pencil. We only do them faster. I suspect that if you could put enough people with various ideas on what to do with computers together they could come up with new, useful applications for the machines.

As to games, since I know that you use a monochrome monitor, I suspect that your game playing is at a disadvantage. In terms of commercial software at least, most of the programs I have seen require at least a CGA colour monitor.

On to Hard Disk Drives. You said that they can get overloaded with seldom used files rapidly and which people are reluctant to get rid of. You are so right. There are other problems. According to one book I have, modern Hard Drives have a life expectancy of 35,000 to 50,000 power on hours. Still, my brother has gone through one hard drive, and is having significant problems with the one in his present machine (I saw it take 3 minutes to boot up DOS!) which will probably mean time in the shop. Most importantly, I have to admit that a Hard Drive is a convenience. I can run Harpoon, or Earl Weaver's Baseball on my floppy drive...but it is a lot easier to run it from the Hard Drive. I can spend more time doing what I want to be doing what I want to be doing with the Hard Drive.

BM: Three minutes to boot up DOS? Has he hidden his DOS files in a subsubsubsubsubdirectory or something?

My current monitor is monochrome but does a reasonable job of adapting CGA colour to shades that are almost always distinct. The new one will be colour VGA, maybe even SVGA if I can get a good deal.

If I hadn't fallen into the same disgusting trap when I first bought my 64 (long since forgotten and discarded), I'd do a Bruce Geryk-type slam of people giving their computers cutesy names... They're collections of microchips, folks--get a life!!

MIKE LOWREY: About computers:
Raleigh NC first let me say that
I read your com-

ments with interest. Second, let me say that I disagree on several points. Here's why.

1. Your view of what's been happening in computers is too pessimistic. Yes, great advances have been made in the past five years in computers. And the truly nice thing is that for a few thousand dollars you can do at home what a very large computer was doing 5-10 years ago. You can buy a faster computer today than was possible 5 years ago for a lot less in real terms. That's a good, not a bad. Laser printers, hard drives, scanners, and modems are becoming affordable to the average buyer. (I bought a 40 MB hard disk for \$399 last Christmas--a similar hard drive would have cost \$800-\$1000 two or three years ago.) And all this means that the home computer can do real work--desktop publishing, regression analysis, serious graphics work, animation, etc. It's not just a place to play games and type the occasional letter anymore.

Now as far as your view of computer usage, as someone who's 25 I can say you're wrong. The young

BASEBALL QUIZ continued
[continued from page 20]

8. An opposing runner attempts to steal second base against the Toledo Mud Hens. Catcher Bill Naharodny realizes he has no chance to catch the runner so he attempts a trick play by throwing a pop-up to the second baseman, Iron Hands Hiller. The shortstop points up at the ball and calls for Hiller to throw the ball to first base to complete their decoyed double play. The confused baserunner slides safely into second base, but gets up when he sees the ball in the air and retreats toward first base. Hiller is laughing so hard that his throw is wide and the runner makes it back to first safely. Is this a legal decoy? Should the runner be called out for running the bases backward after already reaching second safely? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 26]

people of today are quite capable of using computers. In fact, the key is the introduction of the Mac and Windows. With the need to know DOS gone, anyone can be trained to use a computer quickly and easily. There's no intimidating programming requirement.

I'd also like to point out that learning to use or owning a computer is a pointless goal. There will always be plenty of jobs that don't require computer expertise. I can also see where a home computer might make sense for lots of people--it's nice to play games on, but beyond that, what can the average person do with one?

Bruce, if you think it's neat that the same keys do the same thing in Works for the IBM, remember that in the Mac world you have: 1) similar keys doing similar things (as much as possible), 2) you can clip and paste between pretty much all programs and 3) with System 7, and new versions of programs, link data.

In your remark to Andrew York, more of your low-end computer user and proud of it-ness shows. Just because you don't have a hard disk doesn't mean they're not nice or very useful. A hard disk allows you to: a) have quicker access to your files, b) run programs that are too big to fit on a floppy. For example, you'd be able to run PageMaker, which would eliminate most of your layout problem.

BM: I guess I'll see the difference after I get one, but the machine at work loads Works in about a half-second from the hard drive and in about three seconds from the floppy. My XT takes about a minute, which indicates that the credit goes about 95% to the 386 chip and 5% to the hard drive. But there was, I guess, a bit too much malice in my diatribe against hard drives, much based on envy. I suspect that somebody (me) who can program a VCR will have little trouble figuring out when the advantages of the hard drive are real and when the advantages are illusory, and will keep the crap off the hard drive. One advantage I'll have is the experience of working with floppies. I don't mean that hard drive users are mystified by their floppy drives, just that they don't like using them. Sometimes I get the feeling that many new-age users are so enamoured with their hard

drives that changing floppies is like blasphemy: avoid unless strictly necessary.

Let me just insert a late note in here because I can't resist: I'VE GOT 40MB AND I CAN'T FILL IT UP!! Check back in a couple of months: I'll be cringing that I ever wrote that...

I don't want to really get heavily into the Mac vs IBM argument, so suffice it to say that I admire Apple's work in making the Mac attractive and competitive in a tough market. The Mac doesn't seem to be dying out as the 64 did five years ago. If only it weren't so expensive!

I should clarify what I was trying to say in the article last issue, because I detect that I wasn't really well understood. I don't think the technological advance and the drop in prices is a bad, I think the corresponding ever-rising minimum requirements for a computer system is the bad. I didn't mean that the young folks are incapable of using computers, I meant that the older folks are very resistant to change. The more exposure to computers you get while young, the better equipped you'll be to cope with them when they show up at your job.

PageMaker looks interesting (I've combed the library for books on it), but it doesn't get around the central problem that there'd be a six-month period of very late issues while I learned how to best use it. And by then there'd probably be some other hot shot DTP program that would be essential...

ERIC KLIEN:
Billerica MA

Your theory that there is no need for further power in home computers is wrong. For example, let's say that you felt like playing a game of Diplomacy against a computer. Since a computer is blind, it would be unable to play in a normal board game version. Since a computer is deaf, it would have to take input via keyboard. Since a computer is paralyzed, it would be unable to play a normal board game version even if it could see. Finally, a computer would be unable to play even if it could see, hear, and move, because a computer still can't think well enough to negotiate in a game of Diplomacy. If you wanted the computer to do something a little more complicated, like help a

child with her homework, the problems become even more immense. Note that computers are blind, deaf, paralyzed, and can't think well because they don't have enough computer powering to do these functions.

Later on in your article, you claimed that a computer could drive a car but there would be no advantage to this. Considering that humans kill 50,000 people plus injure another million people plus injure another ten million cars per year, you don't see a demand for error-free driving? If you could get computers both smart enough to drive and to protect themselves against thieves, the entire auto insurance industry could be shut down! This would be an immense benefit to people, especially when you consider that the cars would never get lost, would always take the shortest routes, and would always avoid traffic jams.

Why don't computers drive cars already? Because they are blind. They do not have the necessary computer power to process visual images sufficiently to drive well. One day computers will be fast enough to do this, but it will be quite awhile since the world's fastest computers are still tens of thousands of times slower than the human brain. There have been some prototypes of computer driven cars that use computers that operate at hundreds of millions of operations per second, but they can't keep up with the job that the human brain accomplishes by using 100 billion neurons each operating in parallel at 1000 operations per second per neuron.

If you look at the programs on the market, you will find that most of them use all the memory available in your computer plus you will find that they operate a little slower than is ideal. This is because programmers are always pushing machines as fast as they can go. The reasons that programs haven't changed much over the past decade is because there is a huge magnitude difference in the amount of computer power needed between having a computer being able to hear and taking input from a keyboard, from having a computer being able to see and taking input from a keyboard, from having a computer being able to move and being para-

lyzed, from having a computer being able to think and blindly following simple algorithms. It will take decades for computers to become fast enough for these barriers to be broken, but the barriers will slowly come down. Watch multimedia be the next big leap in computer programming, doubling the customer base for home computers.

BM: Well, that's a bit of a look ahead. If your objective is to play a game of Diplomacy, or any board game, against a computer, what specifically are you looking for? Certainly you are not going to look elsewhere upon finding out that the computer cannot move the pieces, or see the pieces, or take vocal input. Someday, maybe, but you're looking too far ahead.

I found your arguments about computers driving a bit off topic. If cars are someday equipped with computers, this will be unrelated to the computers we use in the workplace for productivity and in the home for productivity; education, and entertainment. Computers are in microwaves, VCRs, phone systems, and other modern electronic appliances, but my topic was desktop computers. I have no doubt that business users will always try to remain at the top end of technology, but no home user should have to put up with the trouble to upgrade as often as it appears necessary. Why can't they just designate the 386SX as the Official Home Computer and give the hot rod stuff to business users, but keep us home users supported to that level adequately? I've got a significant portion of my income at the computer store waiting for my 386 to be paid for. By the time it is, will it be obsolete? And more importantly, how many potential home users are staying away because of that very fear?

MIKE BARNO:
Endwell NY

Your article on home computing was generally excellent.

Just one point that I want to touch on right now: CAD/CAE(ngineering) software can be fundamentally more than just super-duper graphics. A good program can develop a mathematical model of the hardware being designed and calculate its performance under various stresses, including variance due to different materials, surface treatments, etc., and the feed manufacturing information to computer-

driven milling equipment. Of course, this is more "business" than "personal" computing, but it tremendously empowers entrepreneurs to develop innovative ideas without the resources of a large corporation. "Telecommuting" enables the physically handicapped (or agoraphobic, or hyperallergic, or anti-urban) to work at home, and has the potential to reduce the pollution and energy problems, wasted time, and other metropolitan hassles, so home computing isn't just games and typing.

BM: I find this really funny: as the trend becomes people staying at home to do work with computers, I now (or at least when they fix the computer at work), spend time at work using a computer to work on my hobby! I guess I'm backwards.

MALCOLM SMITH: If someone wants *Strømmen* NORWAY to buy a home machine of any sort the last place on earth I'd send them to would be to a salesroom where the 'trained' salespersons there know next to sod-all! Because I'm the PC Wallah at our site I get, on average, three or four recommendations a week for home machines.

I usually start out with the two questions:

- 1) "What do you want to do with the machine?" and
- 2) "What do you think you'll actually do with the machine?"

The answer is usually determined

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 23]

9. A batter hits a ball to right center field and outfielders Bobo Breazeale and Shaun Fitzmaurice converge on it. Breazeale makes the catch as the two collide and the force of the collision knocks the glove off of Breazeale's hand. The ball, however, stays put in the glove as it falls to the ground. Breazeale and Fitzmaurice are out--cold, that is. But is the batter out, or can he go for as many bases as he can get? It's your call--and then call for the trainers and smelting salts.

[Next question is on page 29]

by these two questions; also, who the person is within the company and whether or not he wants it for his kids to play on!

It turns out that most of the time I recommend a 286 machine. In recent weeks I've suggested a 386SX, Amiga, and a QL [?] (for a computer nut!).

If I changed my machine it looks like I'd go for a 386 so that I can run UNIX on it at home.

I think your appraisal of what you can do with a microcomputer is a bit damning--don't you think? Or were you trying to stir up a storm? Where in your list is "programming the thing yourself to adjudicate games?" It's like saying the cooker in the kitchen will never catch on as it just gets hot and cold. Heck, the fridge does less than that (just gets cold) and seems to be a major success story. The only limit that any microcomputer has is the ingenuity and imagination of its developers.

BM: Well, it's nice to know that my 386, when I pay for it, will be a good choice in at least one reader's opinion. What's UNIX?

Surely you must know how much time an adjudicator program (such as I forecast in *XL* #28) would take to develop. Just thinking about the flowchart for adjudication is awfully mind-boggling, to say nothing of the record-keeping involved, which might not be difficult but is awfully picky work. But I think a good adjudicator program, with options to allow GMs to choose from to conform with house-rules, would be a great GMing aid, especially to GMs like me that often miss simple standoffs...

Cookers and refrigerators are a poor comparison to computers, as least in relation to my central point: that this environment of immediate obsolescence is a Bad Thing. Fridges and cookers last far longer without people worrying that the new ones have a few extra features, or, more important, that the new ones are aggressively advertised.

MIKE BARNO: Just pull the modem cable when you want to plug in a mouse. You don't use a Mac or Windows, so how often do you use a mouse and telecommunicate at the same time?

BM: Never. However, the mouse doesn't work when reconnected. If I load

Works, telecommunicate, then hang up and do some word processing, the mouse doesn't respond. But don't worry--the new machine will have an extra serial port.

Sports continues to be a popular topic in letters here. I wonder why.... Oh well, let's start with baseball:

BRENT M^CKEE: My brother bought me a copy of *Total Baseball* by John Thorn and Pete Palmer. It bills itself as "The Most Complete Baseball Encyclopedia in the World." Not only does it have player records and season records, it also has articles and a whole lot of information that you didn't know you needed. It is a trivia quiz master's best friend.

BM: I bought Thorn and Palmer's *The Hidden Side of Baseball* before I read Bill James's *Abstract*. I found their "Linear Weights" stats formula, which involves deriving batting, running, fielding and pitching runs versus league average to create a plus-minus rating, quite interesting, even if Bill James correctly pointed out that you cannot claim that team Linear Weights scores correlate nearly perfectly to actual team runs scored (which Palmer and Thorn did in the book), since Linear Weights are based on taking season totals to get the plus/minus totals, which is like knowing the answer before you try to guess it. I'm not really into baseball's history as much as I could be, although I recommend Bill James's *Biographical Encyclopedia*, which is part of his *The Baseball Book* series, and concentrates on the human side of the game rather than the numbers only.

ROBERT LESCO: Regarding last time's *Brampton ON* "It's Your Call" #2, John Olerud, Jays 1b, wears a batting helmet style cap on the field and no one has complained. (He suffered an aneurysm some years ago.)

There is a bit more strategy to pinch-hitting for the pitcher than Bill James admits. What if he has a shut-out going (or it is a low scoring game)? If he's in trouble on the mound and his spot is due up next inning do you bring in your ace to complete one inning? I would say that involves more thought than simply changing pitchers when you like

and leaving them in exactly as long as you want to.

BM: I don't think Roy Hobbs had an aneurysm though. (My little dictionary doesn't know what they are; my big one says aneurysm/aneurism. Thanks for alerting me to the possible misspelling. But I can see another problem in your letter--correspondants are forbidden to use square brackets, since I occasionally need them to insert comments. No problem, I changed 'em by rounding them off!)

The James argument is that the claim about the DH decreasing strategy is overblown because most pitcher vs PH situations are clear-cut and would be handled the same way by almost every manager. There may be a few, but there are not many such situations where different managers would do different things in a more or less even split among the possibilities. Certainly the DH knockers that use that particular argument tend to imply that every time the pitcher comes up. I still wish they'd have the same rules in both leagues: many fans do not realize that the stats are hugely affected. In 1985 the Cards pitching staff was rated far ahead of the Royals but when you added in the DH effect, the stats favoured the Royals.

My suggestion that tennis tie-breaks should be eliminated by simply awarding a tied set to each player (the final set to be played out to 23-21, or however long as necessary) had a logical problem:

PETE GAUGHAN: If you don't decide a set (either by tie-breaks or by two-

game margins) you are faced with possible matches such as this: 6-6, 6-4, 6-6, 6-6, 4-6...and now you are tied at a set apiece with at least two and probably three to play, after three hours on the court. I think it would be even more frustrating to play 45 minutes and have to start over than to lose a tie-break!

BM: I figured there was a problem. Oh well, if we're going to accept tie-breaks, let me now hit on the arbitrary figure of six games equals one set. If we can all agree that five set matches are more potentially exciting than three set matches (I think so, anyhow), why don't they simply make the women's matches four-game sets? Would that be reasonable?

KEVIN BROWN: Basketball; NBA players are too good. There's no adaption to take advantage of an opponent's weakness, NBA teams don't have weaknesses. I think it's because of the small number of players per team. You can't concentrate talent like that and not have all the teams have awesome players. Going from hundreds of college programs to 23 NBA teams leaves anybody that can't do everything (shoot, rebound, defend) out in the cold. You don't get that in other sports because of the higher number of players needed to play. There are fewer college football programs than college basketball programs, yet there are far more NFL players than NBA players. Isn't it obvious that the NBA has too many good players?

BM: Even so, I think there is still the familiar pyramidal structure: a few elite players, followed by more star players, followed by even more regular players, followed by a great number of marginal NBA-calibre players, many of whom seldom see much action. The sports employment numbers at the major league level are about like this:

NFL 1200 jobs
MLB 650 jobs
NHL 500 jobs
NBA 275 jobs

Now let's take the last five years, 86-91, and try to determine the MVP over that period, for each sport. If your argument is that NBA players are too good, then logically that sport should be least likely to have a clearly dominant player, since his opposition is always at a uniformly high level. Yet almost anyone would have little trouble in designating Jordan as basketball's MVP over the last few years. Similarly, with hockey, it's Gretzky. Football (Montana? Rice? Largent?) and baseball (Brett? Canseco? Clemens?) are harder. I think basketball, to my memory, has always been pretty close to having a clear-cut choice (or at least a choice of one or two) as to the best player in the world, and if the NBA is truly a league where all of the players are good, they have clearly produced a huge number of dominant players despite this parity.

MIKE BARNO: Well, yes, most Indy 500s (and most Indy car racing in general) are boring--but auto racing in general

remains my favorite sport, and the only one I'm active in as an official. Watch a NASCAR Winston Cup race, with close competition for five hundred miles, quick pit stops involving a team of six co-ordinated men, and a dozen cars still fighting it out for victory on the last lap. Or find a local dirt track and see your neighbours battling each other in street stocks while trying to figure out changing track conditions. Seems more viscerally competitive than running round trying to get some size of ball or puck into some size of net.

BM: I watched the Vancouver Molson Indy last month on TV, and wasn't impressed. The winner won based on two very skillful passes of the runner-up (the second time after he had had to go into the pits), but I as a non-driver was unimpressed, and in fact was more concerned with how a guy going that fast could dare to try something like that twice, when a miscalculation of a few inches could kill them both. I wonder why they don't have pursuit races like cycling, on an oval track with a constant (low) amount of fuel in a knockout format--that might be exciting to watch, but TV would never go for it live.

More Gulf War stuff now:

ROBERT LESCO: It seemed clear to me that when President Bush was encouraging Iraqis to revolt he was speaking to the army, particularly the Republican Guard, and not to the Kurds, but I'm obviously in the minority. The mandate of Desert Shield/Storm was not to remove Hussein but to liberate Kuwait. It would have been nice but it may have come at the price of U.N. support. Do people really believe that a war can solve all problems without creating more? We like to think WWII was pretty decisive but a lot of East Europeans were no better off than before.

BM: But, much as I hate to say it, they were better off under Russian Communism than they'd have been under German fascism. Similarly, much as I hate to say it, I think Iraqis would be better off under an Iranian-type of government than under the absolute control of the Baath party--whether Saddam is at the helm or not. We have no indication at all that Saddam's successor would be any different,

except the ominous sign in the form of one-party dictatorship that exists there. As for what Bush exactly said, I don't know the words used, but once it was clear that a revolution was taking place, we should have made the fight a fair one instead of watching and waiting for the inevitable slaughter.

KEVIN BROWN: I don't think the point of the Gulf War was a statement against military force, nor was it to help out a friend. The war was the ultimate expression of George Bush trying to shed the "wimp" label. I think you missed my point on Iraq being a "threat." You said "we can't call a country a threat just because they have an army capable of invasion"; my point was that Iraq was NOT capable of invasion, at least not of any nation that had a military force. Kuwait had practically none, so they were easy pickings. No other Iraqi neighbour was so weak as to be threatened.

MIKE BARNO: "Threat" has two separate components: capability, and willingness to use it. In the intelligence community, the former is evaluated without regard to the latter, since leadership can change (we won't mention what the world might be like had the recent Soviet coup succeeded) and

motives can be erroneously interpreted. (You mentioned the last point with regard to the Iraq-Kuwait dispute over oil and loan repayment. Be aware that the al-Sabah family, Bush, the Saudi sheiks, and others had plenty of accurate intelligence on this matter, just as Roosevelt did about Pearl Harbor, Hitler did about D-Day, and Churchill did about Coventry. Most military information is wasted either because leaders don't want to compromise their sources, or more often, the blithering idiots just don't believe it.

BM: If the war was a great stunt to allow Bush to shed the wimp label, I must point out the beneficial side effect: the UN has now lost its own wimp label, having successfully intervened with force against an international aggressor. As for whether they were able to invade neighbours, I think they had some success with Iran, and certainly the Saudis didn't plead for and then happily allow American service personnel into their territory without some thought that they might be in some danger from the north. The war was not Iraq vs U.S.A., it was Iraq vs. the U.N. coalition: granted, the U.S.A. did most of the work, paid most of the bills and reaped few benefits, but if the U.S. hadn't led we'd still all be there today, and the Gulf War would be the Vietnam of the 90's.

MIKE BARNO: Tibet a separate nation?!? Maybe Beijing is casting a second vote in the UN General Assembly (I haven't kept up on this), but that doesn't make it so. Name me one thing Tibetans can decide for themselves. Kuwait was part of Iraq most of the time going back to Mesopotamian times until after World War Two, when British colonial governors (not Kuwaitis nor Iraqis) drew up new borders for political reasons.

BM: OK, I goofed on Tibet, I guess I have to advocate an invasion for liberation now, right? Just tell me how to do so, and you got it. I think the Chinese are going to come under a lot of pressure now as the last Communist superpower, and clearly they do not deserve MFN status from anyone until they come around with more modern stances on Tibet, Hong Kong, and I'm sure a few others I'd look up if I had the time. As for Kuwait, if Saddam wanted it that bad, and if there were

BASEBALL QUIZ continued
[continued from page 26]

10. Runners on first and second with no outs. Henry Pulvermacher grounds the ball to third base where the third sacker fields the ball and attempts to tag the runner coming toward him. The runner retreats to second to avoid the tag and the third baseman then throws the ball there and the second baseman tags the bag for the force out on the runner from first, but cannot make the tag on the retreating runner. Is the runner who began on second out for running the bases in the wrong direction or failing to advance on a force play, or is his move legal since the force has been removed? It's your call.

[Next question is on page 34]

historic precedents in favour, he could probably have negotiated a merger until; he made his reputation as a military bully by attacking countries with similar-sounding names and liquidating people who didn't think this was an Awesome Idea from Allah. My bosses will tell you that much of Europe and most of Asia was part of Iran (Persia) at some time or other, which I do not doubt, but this doesn't mean it's right to go back to what we had centuries ago.

On to a new topic: the third largest political party in the U.S. Guess again...

KEVIN BROWN: What do Liberterrians stand for? **LESS GOVERNMENT!** The welfare state that currently exists cannot be eliminated slowly, it must be wiped out in one fell swoop. To ignore the creeping socialism in the government is to pave the way for tyranny, and that road has already begun construction.

BM: Millions of government workers lose their jobs in the Inaugural Address? Sounds like fun.

MIKE BARNO: The Liberterrian Party, in the highly improbable event that they should get elected to any positions of real authority, would attempt to avoid the "power corrupts" problem by dispersing some power and simply eliminating as much as possible, on the theory that individual freedom and responsibility should be more-or-less absolute. Of course, all the bureaucracies would resist dissolution.

BM: Why can't the Liberterrians try to get on as a far-right branch of the Republican party? Why do I suggest this? The latest B.C. election, between the near-socialist NDP and the poorly organized (decimated by the recently resigned premier) right-wing Social Credit party, was historic in that the NDP won a huge majority based on 41% of the vote. This happened because a new middle of the road party took over half of the Sacred vote, due to the endless scandals and screwups perpetrated by the Socreds while in office. In a three party system, this happens all the time, and if the Liberterians were ever to become strong enough to be a legitimate third party, they would almost certainly take enough of the Republican vote away to hand the election to the Democrats. Think of it: in 1986 the NDP won 42%

of the vote in a two-way race and went .400 in a Legislature seats won-lost record. This time their support fell to 41% and they have 70% of the seats!

MIKE BARNO: Listening to Larry King over Beatles/Hendrix/etc.?!? Oh well, *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

BM: Excuse me?

KEVIN BROWN: You listen to Larry King? I had you figured as a Rush Limbaugh man, oh well...

BM: Well, that at least confirms the spelling--I have only heard Mr. Limbaugh's name disparagingly mentioned by Mr. King, as he appears to have a radio talk show of his own that panders to what Larry calls right wing whackos, by screening calls so that l*b*r*a*l d*m*cr*ats cannot get in, and having no guests. I have not heard the show, but it sounds like the 1991 talk radio version of a Hitler speech. At least on the King show the RWWs get to mouth off a bit if they can put up with Larry laughing at them before he hangs up.

But I must admit that a major reason why I listen to the King show is the half-hourly news. News at night on local radio is nearly unheard of, and Canada is so caught up in the Constitutional wrangle that it's nice to get away from that for a few hours a day. (It reinforces my belief that this country isn't really breaking up, except for everyone shouting that it is.) One Sunday night I heard the Russian coup story develop, and then gave Yeltsin a standing O. for staring down the tanks. The following night I listened to the coup weaken and wither away. I wish I'd known about the show when the Gulf War was happening.

By the way, rumours that I am the guy from Houston who calls to say that "the water is warm" are untrue....

ROBERT LESCO: I am with you on your comments on the Kennedy rape case. If you can suppress your revulsion at the thought of a prosecuting attorney more concerned with nailing a Kennedy than seeing justice prevail, it's hard not to admire the cleverness in her claim that she has three women who have been previously assaulted by the accused who want to testify. The beauty is that these women need not exist. It is very unlikely that a judge would allow such testimony but

It smears the accused perhaps to the point where an unbiased jury cannot be found. I'm aware from reading that the Kennedy's are unliked by a large body of people and this dislike often crosses the beyond the realm of what is rational.

BM: It's hard for me to fault the prosecuting attorney when this woman has had her name dragged through the press. Even with the growing suspicion that the rape charge may have been motivated by vengeance, it still is clear that the woman started at a great disadvantage, the original ball being dropped by the New York Times by legitimizing the publication of the woman's name. Even if the accusation is bull, it doesn't retroactively make the Times right. I guess it's a little unfair that the Kennedy name was publicized, but when you're rich and famous, you take the good with the bad. Nothing was going to prevent the name of the accused from coming out once it was learned that the event happened in the Kennedy compound.

ROSIE ROBERTS: There are some very good arguments for not printing the name of anyone accused of a crime until he has been found guilty, but they are not specific to sexual crimes and are not the same arguments as apply to not revealing the name of a rape victim. It is certainly tough on any innocent man to have his good name sullied (although in some peer groups, to be accused of rape is a matter for pride), but it is nowhere near so tough as it is for the equally innocent woman whose body has been defiled, whose self-respect is destroyed and who will--if her name is known--also be exposed to the prurient curiosity of strangers. I agree with you, ideally, it would be unnecessary to conceal the names of rape victims--they have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of, and this should be more widely appreciated.

BM: I shudder at the thought of any peer groups where a rape accusation becomes a status symbol--surely if we exclude criminals and drug addicts and other hopeless lowlife we can recognize that most men would not be proud at being thus tagged. Both accused and victim in rape charges should have legal recourse against negative publi-

city if they are found to be in the right. That means that the Florida woman should be allowed to sue the *New York Times* if Kennedy is found guilty, and the Vancouver man should be allowed to sue the local paper. And if Kennedy is innocent, the woman in Florida should be jailed.

ROSIE ROBERTS: In Germany, there is a saying that a Mercedes-Benz is supplied with built-in right-of-way. In fact, this is rather a feature of the type of person who drives one--many of them really do drive as though they literally own the road. Similarly, there are people who behave in other circumstances as though their wanting something in some way gives them the right to take it--whether "it" is a day off work, a wallet found lying in the street, a pirate copy of a computer game, or a woman who happens to take their fancy. People who have amassed a certain quantity of fame and/or money are particularly prone to acquire this attitude--their path has been so often smoothed for them that they cannot believe it should ever be rough. So, far from accepting that the laws which apply to everyone else should also apply to them, they often claim, when arrested, that they are being picked on for being rich and/or famous. Similarly, Mercedes drivers frequently claim they are the victim of Mercedes bashing--but **EVEN IF THEY ARE**, the laws must still apply.

BM: Well stated. One thing that is completely clear about the Kennedy rape case: whoever is telling the truth, it is not a situation that a Kennedy should ever have found himself in. And having been caught with his pants down, Teddy should quit denying everything and realize once and for all that one cost of his fame and fortune is higher penalties for screwing up.

The English brigade hit me at the very mention of William Safire....

PETE GAUGHAN: Ah, words. Is Hal a fictitious friend, or a fictional one??

BM: Hal was the guy on page 23 last issue thinking of buying a computer and asking my advice--I made him up and referred to him as a fictitious friend. Looking the words up, I note that fictitious has a connotation of deliberate deception: fictional would have been better.

ROSIE ROBERTS: Perhaps it is just as well you're dropping the Scrabble, both Chambers' and Webster list both "toupet" and "toupee", giving "toupee" as an alternative of "toupet". The word is described as of "Gmc origin"; your alternative spelling looks as though somebody once assumed it was French.

BM: Somebody did: me! If it is of Gmc (Germanic, I assume?) origin, does that mean the pronunciation is too-PETT?

OK, dictionary delvers, here's something that came up on the Larry King show recently. What is the most common meaning of "celibacy?" If you said "abstention from sex," as I did, check your dictionary (assuming it is one which lists meanings in order of usage and not in chronological order). The three I have all say it means "remaining unmarried, esp. because of religious vows," with my answer in second place. AIDS infecting usage?

Odds and ends time:

ROBERT LESCO: I think we can thank that regrettable movie for the size of Mozart bicentennial festivities, and for the ghastly misconceptions of Mozart that are so prevalent of late. If I recall rightly, Rossini was born Feb 29 1792. We'll see how that is commemorated.

BM: The Mozart bash has died down in recent months from what it was when 1991 opened. I switch from Larry King right to Stereo Morning on CBC-FM on weekdays, and I recall them plugging this from mid-1990 on. Surprising how it's died down. I still think celebrating the death of a composer is kind of macabre. But I did enjoy the movie, those who care enough about music will realize the distortion of historic fact and those who don't won't, but who cares: it was a great picture.

KEVIN BROWN: Eeek, did I say "politically correct"? I guess I did, but that's not what I meant. While my zine is certainly not politically correct in the popular usage of the term, what I was trying to say is that it's not politically agreeable with David Hood.

BM: But a politically correct United soccer zine would have some humour potential, wouldn't it...

GARY BEHNEN: Thanks for the back issues of *Excelsior*! I enjoyed reading

through them. It was also nice meeting you in Toronto. Obviously I had a great time, hope you did, too. Any chance you'd make it across the Rockies & the Great Plains to KC next year?

In XL 38 and then 39 I saw references of a game begun in *Praxis* (Elgin) renamed and rehoused as "Mahler." It apparently was determined to abandon/end this game, but you made reference to a "BN from Eric Klein." I reviewed '87-'89 gamestarts and found none for *Praxis* or Elgin listed. Can you clarify the BN for me? If it is one this office has recorded, I'd like to close the book on it. Thanks.

Backgammon is a great game, but I've never quite played your automatic double stakes. Perhaps if you wind up in KC sometime, we can wile away a few hours?

BM: I accept the challenge, but I don't know if I can get there! Certainly I'd very much like to. But I must object to this attribution of automatic doubles (which is an arbitrary doubling of the stakes whenever the initial roll is a tie, forcing a reroll) to me, as though I invented the darn scheme or something. There nothing I hate more than losing money because of auto-doubles: I am a killer in the small-stake games, but when you roll six auto-doubles to start with, the gods of gammon get me every time for a 64 or a 128 or something. Actually, they aren't too bad as long as they are limited to one or two.

If Elgin/Mahler has a BN, it would probably have been issued in 1990. I've looked and I cannot find the letter I got from Eric Klein giving me the number issued, but it could probably be tracked down through him. As you probably read, only two people, Frank Easton and Marc Peters, decided to send orders, and since this didn't even include the guy who tried so hard to have it rehoused in Canada, Doug Acheson, I decided that it probably was best to abandon it. All four of us were at DipCon and nobody said much to me about it.

Request time...

ROBERT LESCO: I do hope that you will mention your up-coming provincial election. From what I've read the two major players are not involved in B.C.

politics. What I mean is that it appears that the NDP are campaigning against Bill Vander Zalm and the Socreds are campaigning against [Ontario's NDP premier] Bob Rae. (I'd choose Mr. Vander Zalm myself.)

BM: Perhaps, but you haven't lived through the Vander Zalm regime as I have. (By the way, interesting use of 'upcoming' with a hyphen there: in one shot you've pointed out the word's awkwardness but in actually using it you demonstrate the usefulness of the word.) The election began, as you say, with early Socred commercials using man in the street interviews to point out the Ontario deficit, and early NDP commercials urging a change from the tired old Socred dicks that had screwed up the province for five years. As a conservative type of voter, I was considering not voting. The choices were to vote for BVZ's biggest apologist, or to vote for a socialist radical. Until the debate on CBC, I had no idea what the hell I was going to do, but then I was caught up in the tide after BC Liberal leader Gordon Wilson performed well in the TV debate. Since I wasn't going to vote Socred (despite a five-minute video that came in the mail from the local Socred candidate, who paid for 5,000), and couldn't bring myself to vote NDP, the Liberal option seemed like a fine idea. Apparently I wasn't the only one who thought so. The final tally was around 47-21-7, with the Liberals in second place and the Socreds in third, but the real story is that the NDP went down, from 42% to 41% and went from opposition to huge majority. We must now hope that Mike Harcourt was not lying when he promised a balanced budget after five years, but the number of rookie MLAs is refreshing. In our riding, it was no contest, NDP 55%, Liberal 30%, Socred (video and all) 15%. It was an amazing turn of events, and despite losing the government to the socialists, I think it was probably a lost cause from the start, and the emergence of a third party is a great consolation prize.

A snippet from a very old letter to conclude this. I phoned up Eric Brosius with choochoo orders a few days after the close of the Runestone Poll, and got as a bonus a rundown of the results. Next call I made was to

Cal White to confirm the generous accommodations he'd offered me. And, of course, I couldn't help but spill the beans...

CAL WHITE: My thanx again for Runestone results. Just a warning though. You stole Eric Brosius's thunder. He phoned me the next day and I had to admit to him that you'd called. You'll be answering to him at DipCon if he shows (grin!)...

BM: Uh oh. Actually, I have since apologized to Eric on the phone for this (which means he'll make the congratulatory call the minute his Mac declares a winner next year!!) but I had no idea what I'd have said had I been confronted at DipCon!

ROM

Let's get right in to these answers: this issue's gonna be long enough.

1. Did you get to DipCon? If not, why not? If so, what'dja think? Did the lack of promotion have anything to do with its success? Would you come back in four years?

ROBERT LESCO: I enjoyed DipCon, particularly the social aspects. I appreciated the tanks of coffee and the muffins since it meant that a game could be played to completion without running out for food. If it's in Toronto I will be back in 4 years. There's a limit to how far I will go to play Diplomacy and, if you were following my attendance, you would observe that I don't wake up early to play, either.

BRENT M^CKEE: As you know, I was at DipCon, having combined it with a two week visit with my kid brother. I enjoyed it, although with 20/20 hindsight, I have to say that the decision to change to best three from first three in the scoring system was a mistake in light of the fact that there was not the great variety of games played that there might have been if people weren't so intent on bettering their Diplomacy scores. I'm not sure that the publicity was the main reason for the comparatively low turnout. Try high prices, the GST, and the apparent difficulty in getting to Toronto from within the USA. In four years, I would probably try to make it back, although two weeks in southern On-

tario is a bit more than this prairie boy can stand.

MIKE BARNO: Couldn't afford to get to DipCon, otherwise I would have. I'm likelier to make CanCon next year than Kansas City for geographics reasons. I got good advance information because I was known to be considering attending.

KEVIN BROWN: No, didn't make it. August is a bad time for me, gotta work for Back-to-School.

ANDREW YORK: Nope, I didn't get to DipCon. The primary, and only reason, MONEY. If anyone would like to fund my gaming travels, let me know, otherwise, my travels will be limited to what I can afford. I'm very much hoping to make DipCon in KC next year.

MIKE LOWERY: No, I wasn't at DipCon. If you're wondering why, the cost and date (bad for me this year) were factors. But ultimately, I didn't go because DipCon just didn't excite me. No publicity, no personal notes, no calls just left me with the feeling that DipCon existed and that was about it. Vince & Gary made me want to go to PoolCon, in contrast, by making me feel wanted. Those things count.

As DipCon at CanCon in 1995 I think that you're really jumping the gun. Let's start worrying about that in 1993 or 1994. A lot can happen in the hobby by then. And, no, I don't think a permanent rotation (go to the same site in a region every four years) is *a priori* a good.

BM: Nor do I: my point in asking the question was to see if people were pleasantly surprised enough by what happened there to want to go back, IF POSSIBLE. There was enough bad publicity about the event beforehand that I

wanted to see if people would change their tune as a result of having been there. I didn't expect people to change their tune unless they were there, of course, but I did expect a few more. It seems that driving to cons and picking people up along the way is going out of style. The prevalent attitude today seems to be I go by air or I don't care. This complaining about how hard it is to get to Toronto from the U.S. by air was surprising--surely you can find a flight to Buffalo and hop on a bus for an hour or so. I didn't notice a great difference between Vancouver and Toronto in terms of prices, if anything, it seemed cheaper there.

2. *It has been asserted that during the 1980 US presidential campaign, Reagan and Bush were involved in secret negotiations with Iran, under which Iran agreed to delay the release of the American hostages until Reagan took power. Do you find this plausible? Can this affect Bush's reelection chances?*

BRENT MCKEE: Plausible; I don't know. What would the Iranians have done if Reagan didn't win. And yet that administration has not been that notable for its ethics. Will this hurt Bush's re-election chances? Given the Gulf War, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, the aftermath of the anti-Gorbachev coup, I doubt it. This is a new era of good feeling, or if you prefer, of Pax Americana.

ROBERT LESCO: I suppose it's plausible. It's also plausible that they were speaking to the Democrats beyond "official" contacts. It's coming to light a bit late for a lot of people to believe or care about.

BM: The Canucks are non-committal, but the Yankees aren't...

MIKE BARNO: Not only possible, but probable. I asserted this in print in early '81 but was ignored. Given everything else Reagan's people did, and the desire of Khomeini's group to humiliate Carter, it makes more sense than you might think. Note that US weapons started flowing to Iran (through Israel) shortly after the inauguration and hostage release. "No deals with terrorists" was purely for public consumption. So the kidnappings continued, and the Casey-North "enterprise" sold Iran more armaments

BASEBALL QUIZ continued [continued from page 29]

11. White Wings Tebeau hits a sharp line drive up the middle. But the ball strikes the pitcher's shoe and deflects towards the first-base line and hits Tebeau as he is running in fair territory toward first base. Is Tebeau out for being hit with the ball in fair territory? It's your call.

[Answers by December 20]

when they wanted something besides cocaine to finance the Contra "war" (actually a campaign of destruction to make Nicaragua ungovernable in the hopes of the people kicking out the Sandinistas).

KEVIN BROWN: Did Reagan get the Iranians to delay the hostage release? Probably. Will it matter in the '92 election? No. This is probably related to the Iran-Contra thing, the Iranians delay the release of the hostages, and in return Reagan sells them arms in violation of US law and UN resolutions. Doesn't matter now.

ANDREW YORK: It is plausible, as just about anything is. However, I don't think it will make a hill of beans during the next elections. The Democrats don't need to look for something to tarnish the Bush years, they need to find a candidate for the White House that makes sense and will do something for the U.S. Without a viable candidate, any attempt to discredit the Republicans will be useless.

MIKE LOWERY: There's no limit to the silliness the human mind can produce. First of all, the current version pretty much excludes Bush directly and has Reagan's campaign chief cutting a deal with Iran to wait until after the election to release the hostages. The charges are improbable at best; the story, if it were true, would have destroyed the Republican party, with friendly Iran in a permanent position to blackmail the Reagan administration. I doubt Reagan and co. would be that stupid.

BM: Well, for my part, I recommend that you do not read *October Surprise*, the book that was written by the Reagan aide that made the original charges. It reads like the combination of a telephone book (too many characters) and a graduate thesis (too many big words and technical crap). I can't believe that she couldn't get a real writer to make it palatable.

It does seem nearly certain that concern over the hostages being released in the middle of the campaign hugely affected the strategy of the Reagan campaign. But it's a huge jump to go from watching the U.S. Iranian assets to see if they were being prepared for transport, and deploying a bunch of connected people to check into whether the negotiations were about to get somewhere, to the point

where we figure that deals were made to ensure that they would remain in captivity.

A major point against is this: why wait until inauguration day to release the hostages? They'd already won the damn election.

I must say that Americans tend to hold a grudge far too long: even though I abhor the Iran-Contra stuff the anti-Iran reaction against even reopening diplomatic relations five years after the hostages returned home was amazing to me.

I certainly don't think this is over, and I think it may affect the campaign. Certainly it should matter. If it's proven true, I think even Ted Kennedy would have a great shot running against Bush--if nominated.

3. *What do you think of the "political correctness" movement? (Is there anyone out there who really prefers to be called a "womyn"?)*

MIKE LOWERY: PC sucks!!!

BM: And I want to add that he tried to debate the issue but couldn't find the right words. So, eloquently, he crossed it all out and just issued a general slam. Mike, maybe you should move to Texas:

ANDREW YORK: I haven't heard of this movement here in Texas. Thus, I can't make any judgment on it (and I feel I'm fairly well versed in national concerns).

BM: I guess it's been outlawed or something there. Well, what else have we got?

BRENT MCKEE: Consider this: A professor of anthropology at a college served as curator of a show at the museum called *Out of the Heart of Africa*, which focussed on the experiences of White Colonial types in Africa. The local black community (most of whom have never been to Africa) call the show racist and picket it. The professor goes back to her regular job and teaches a class in Black Studies. She is hounded from the classroom by her black students, who believe that their perception of what the show was represents her personal opinions and attitudes. Her house is vandalized and she is personally harassed into resigning. The student council does not defend her. The Faculty passes a resolution saying essentially that they are sorry for the

discomfort suffered by the students who had to suffer having her teach the class! Where did this happen? Try Scarborough College. That is political correctness at its most extreme. I'm against it.

ROBERT LESCO: I've an article written by York University's Race Relations officer and its Womens Studies head which is amazing. They [the PC people] excuse themselves in advance by stating that white males cannot be victims of discrimination. The use of the word "correct" illustrates something I first observed of the left in University. While the right will disagree with your opinion and argue against it, the left simply denies an opposing view's right to exist. And don't use the term McCarthyism. Universities and their faculties were free to (and did) openly oppose McCarthy. This is far more sinister. We have gone beyond equality of opportunity and are now shooting for equality of results. Happily, it's destined to collapse under the weight of its own hypocrisy, and we will freely be able to use words like "banana" (I kid you not, it's on the list of words thou shalt not speak) again. (I think someone decided it refers to a person of Asian origin who has given up his culture or some such thing.) I've gone on a but but I get worked up when my freedom of speech/thought becomes threatened. It is the act itself that determines discrimination or no, not the identity of the victim of perpetrator.

MIKE BARNO: PC is proof that any good idea (in this case, "sensitivity") can and, sooner or later, will be overdone. Of course, the debate is an excuse for the usual right-wing curmudgeons to exhibit their bigotry and for the usual left-wing idealists to exhibit their sanctimony. For the rest of us, it's time to work out secondary consequences of the civil rights movement. How do we reconcile protection of minorities with freedom of expression? Where, between Klan "nigger-lynchings" and a State-imposed thought control denying all differences, do we cross the line into unacceptable censorship?

(And as long as people are debating how many "rights" they're willing to give up in the interest of considerateness, will they finally do

the same regarding the War on Drug Users? Education? Handgun Crime? The end of the Cold War, and now the collapse of the Soviet Union, passed with almost no acknowledgement of the freedoms denied US citizens in the fight against communism. Will we get as many revelations about the CIA as the Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, etc., are getting about the KGB and its predecessor organizations such as the NKVD? Will as many documents get destroyed in Langley, Virginia, as in Dzerzhinsky Square?)

BM: OK Mike, I think you're off the topic there. Next!

KEVIN BROWN: The basis is sound, to try to word things so as not to offend people, but there's no end to what can be cut out this way. Plus it's not really the place of authority figures (whether government or academic, since this generally occurs on college campuses) to tell people what words are acceptable and which ones are not. Let's be real, they're only words.

By the way, if we're going to call them womyn, why not change ourselves to myn, just to piss them off....

BM: Good idea. What the PC movement is doing is not dumping on the bigots of the world, but dumping on the language for (they claim) encouraging bigotry. Years ago, we changed "coloured" to "Negro" or "black". Now we are told this was not enough and we must change this to "African-American." I listened to the CBC succumb in a story about the Atlantic fishery, where the copy editor substituted the ludicrous "people who fish" for "fishermen." If a word is offensive it is not always the fault of the word itself. Nigger is offensive because it is a manufactured word designed to offend. Coloured is offensive because it implies that "not coloured" is somehow normal or natural. But black, or Negro, is not offensive unless you read something into it. To go one step further and say "African-American" is proper is just silly: the word is bulky and awkward and makes one wonder what we'll use when AA acquires connotations that somebody doesn't like.

If I'm in a class that is disrupted by PC activists, I want my tuition back. If I'm a professor, I want the right to bar PC activists from my class if they disrupt proceedings, and

I want them expelled if they are students. If the PC folks want to make asses of themselves in a student rag or in demonstrations, that's fine. But once they start disrupting the classes, that's enough, and for the good of the bulk of the students, who don't give a shit about PC's excesses, I suspect the universities will realize that money talks and start cracking down.

I want to say something regarding Robert's exposure and definition of the word banana, which I have never heard. I'm afraid that I am completely bigoted against immigrants of any race who refuse to make some effort to fit into the society of their adopted country (and we all know there are some, and the phenomenon is not limited to Asians). I hotly deny, however, that this is racism. If the slang term banana and the PC movement's efforts to ban it are in reference to Asian immigrants who refuse to learn North American customs (such as the English language), I don't like the word, but I agree with the sentiment.

4. *Should the LA police chief resign over the videotaped beating of "motorist" Rodney King?*

BRENT MCKEE: Yes. Even though (hopefully) the attitudes of the officers involved do not reflect those of the Chief, the responsibility for making sure that the officers have socially acceptable attitudes in their racial attitudes is his responsibility.

MIKE BARNO: Probably. Definitely for the patterns uncovered by the probe. Sure, they don't want civil servants dumped for political reasons, but does it make sense that the police chief can't be fired for well-established just cause?

ANDREW YORK: NO, based solely on the videotape. How can an individual in charge of (literally) thousands of workers be solely and ultimately responsible for each and every action by those workers? IF Gates's policies led to this incident, YES; if it was a random event by rogue officers, NO. I'm a police officer myself (small town, compared to LA). I can see how a police chief can have limited effect on a single (or small group of) officers. I can also understand the frustration of officers who continually arrest the

same people for the same offenses--only to see them released by the judiciary and penal systems.

ROBERT LESCO: I'm not one of those who believes that the boss should resign for what a subordinate does on his own. Rather those involved should resign. I read in Time that at least one is seeking compensation for the "stress" all the attention has caused him.

KEVIN BROWN: In 1982 Daryl Gates said that more blacks die from police choke holds because "in some blacks the veins or arteries do not open up as fast as they do in normal people." Gates is much like George Bush, he says he's going to do something about the problem, but when it comes down to it he's not really doing anything. Should he be forced to resign? I don't think so. I am glad to see him retiring, but to hold him responsible for the actions of all policemen would set a bad precedent.

BM: I originally read that quote in a Wambaugh novel! I think that for all the talk about holding the top guy responsible for everything, there is no way you can make this work. Certainly the immediate superiors should be suspended or something to send the message, and the accused should be fired, obviously. But if you cannot show that the police chief was at fault, then he cannot be fired (although it's fair to subject him to a little heat in the press). But this comment in 1982 seems to indicate to me that Gates should go, and probably should have gone then.

Nobody commented on the treatment of the victim, a small-time criminal and police nuisance who, in the eyes of the media, suddenly became the poor victim. You don't hear about the beating of "con-man" Rodney King or "convicted thief" Rodney King: what we get is "motorist" Rodney King. Like that's the best light they can paint him in. Like all the poor guy was doing was driving his car. Like we believe that the police kicked the shit out of him (terribly wrong as this may have been) for NO REASON WHATSOEVER. Yeah, right. Tell me another one.

5. *Canadians: What are your views on the recently released report of the Spicer Commission?*

MIKE BARNO: What was the Spicer Commission? Most Americans get little Canadian news. The free-trade pact discussions with Mexico got more coverage than those with Canada, in spite of your nationwide debate. We only heard about the huge James Bay II power project when environmentalists made noise about New York State contracting to buy power from HydroQuebec. A representative of the Cree Indians came through recently and got some towns to pass meaningless resolutions urging the state to cancel the contracts while it still can.

ROBERT LESCO: Let me ask you--since the report was released, what have you heard of the Spicer Commission? I've read nothing. No mention from Joe Clark or the Unity Cabinet or anyone in the media. Perhaps a play for time; a boondoggle for certain. Very few surprises in that report. Here's something to do: list Canada's problems out loud (that's a few). Then read in the newspaper, "...meanwhile the Spicer Commission is listening to Inuit poetry." It has received all the respect it merits.

BRENT MCKEE: To be honest with you, I don't think that the Spicer Commission told us anything that we

didn't already know. It was an exercise in "participatory democracy" I suppose, but I don't think it accomplished anything that an extensive public opinion poll couldn't have done. **BM:** Yup, clearly the Spicer Commission report was so far gone in the direction of "What a great country, Oh! Let's save it!" that it was clear they weren't really listening to anyone they couldn't convert to their own views. I think that notwithstanding (there's that word again...) the concern over having the constitution hammered out in back rooms, it's time the politicians did something on their own without going out on a cross-country junket every time the Cabinet has an idea.

Questions for next time:

1. Any comments on issues raised in the editorial on page 8?
2. Thomas vs. Hill: who'd you believe; what did you think of the process and/or the outcome?
3. Who should bear the blame for the Braves losing the '91 World Series?

FAURE from page 39

PRESS:

Maestra: Address change update--Pierre has moved, Claude is in Europe until mid-December. The deadline is seven weeks away this time to compensate for the millions of Christmas cards that will weigh down the lettercarriers.

Ger-Rus: If this game does not end this move I will support Austria into your centres. You deserve to be eliminated.

Ger-Ita: Your fate & 2-way is in your partner's hands.

Ger-Aus: Congrats!

DEADLINE for Winter 1911/Spring 1912 is Noon PST, Friday, January 3rd, 1992.



